MEMOIR

OF

ROBERT POLLOK, A. M.

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THE FOLLOWING

MEMOIR OF A YOUTHFUL POET,

IS INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR,

TO *** *********, AN AMERICAN LADY.

"STAT NOMINIS UMBRA."

"Yes, of thy country's fame, worthy art thou,
A noble matron, sure, though young in years;
And though I see around thee fair compeers,
No envy comes to darken thy pale brow;
Thine eye with eagle's brightness well I wean
Woman's real greatness has discerned true—
A fountain sealed, a garden fair are you;
Ay, and most artful—but in wisdom seen,
Aspiring after end that's worthy still;
Ambition call it not, nor thought of praise,
Thy hidden aim that leads thee thus to raise.
Above the bubbles vulgar fashion please—
No; sure 'tis not of earth, but from above
Thy spirit glows with rays of Heaven's own love,
And in the present still the future sees."

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LIFE

OF

ROBERT POLLOK, A. M.

PART FIRST.

A Biographer relates facts which every man can understand; and though it is true that it is the history of an individual, yet on the supposition that he is an individual who has reached distinction by his talents or by his virtues,—that he has come out from among the multitude, and is one whom they have delighted to honour, he is, in the elements at least, of his character, one of themselves—a representative or type of a large class of men, and in forming an accurate apprehension of his character we make a reach at general truths. We may not have the delineation of a whole nation or community, but we have that of a class; and as nations consist of classes of men, on the supposition that the history of one individual of each could be written, we should then have, as near as possible, a fair view of the nation. It is to be observed, also, that an individual stands in certain relations to others, and therefore the illustration which we give of his life casts often a large flood of light upon the times and country in which he lived. The most accurate view of the world's history, therefore, would be best accomplished by a series of biographies of select individuals of all nations, from the most ancient times down to our own day. Bible history, it may be observed, is written on this principle. Little else is presented to our view, in the history comprehending the period that elapsed from the flood until near the times of christianity, than sketches of the lives of individuals; and yet every student of Sacred History knows what a great light it casts upon the state of contemporary communities and nations. These reflections are perhaps of too general a kind to preface the present sketch. Our only apology is, that Mr. Pollok belongs to a country which, though not large, has done much for education, and that he is the representative of a class of persons in it who have undergone great self-denial in trimming the lamp of knowledge at home, and in scattering its glorious influence over other

parts of the earth. After we have told the facts of his life, we shall refer more particularly to the class he belongs to—meanwhile we shall proceed with our narrative.

Robert Pollok, the Author of the Course of Time, was born in Renfrewshire, Scotland, on the 19th of October, 1798. His father followed the occupation of a farmer, as did also his grandfather. Mrs. Pollok was the mother of eight children, of whom four were sons and four daughters. The poet Robert was the youngest except one. It appears that in early years he was a fine stout child, for when he was only one year old he could both walk and speak. His brother, who has published what may be called the more private writings of the Poet, in a volume entitled his Life, informs us that in his childhood he was full of wit and humour. Were we to venture an addition to the testimony of one who knew him so intimately, we should say that, besides these, he had a certain manliness of character which did not forsake him till the day of his death. An anecdote is mentioned of him about this period which indicates the qualities we have just referred to in no small degree, and is worthy perhaps of being recorded here as marking the developments of early genius. The peasantry of Scotland, it should be noticed, continue for some considerable time to dress their children, whether male or female, after precisely the same fashion, so that it is no uncommon thing to see well grown up boys running about in girls' clothes. Robert seems to have been in this predicament until he felt it to be an annoyance no longer to be endured. He accordingly wished to doff the petticoat, and to wear some other dress that bore a stronger resemblance to the masculine costume. His mother was much opposed to the change. Being a thrifty person, she did not think it befitting to yield the point to her boy, incongruous though it might be to see him dressed up after the manner of a girl. But wishing to humour him as far as possible, she agreed that after his present garment was "done," she would consent to the change. The discering little urchin took his mother at her word, and without saying more, he retired into an adjoining room for a few minutes, during which time he must have made a good use of his pen knife, for when he came out his petticoat was draggling like a long train behind him. His good mother was thus outwitted—the petticoat was fairly "done" now. She gave up the point, and it is perhaps needless to add, that from this time he began to wear the breeches. His first teacher was his mother. She taught him to read the Bible, and afterwards to commit the shorter catechism to memory. And as some of his ancestors had suffered much during the persecutions of the Presbyterians in Scotland, between the years 1660 and 1688, she told him anecdotes illustrative of the character of those times—a circumstance which appears to have inspired him with an ardent zeal for civil and religious liberty. Napoleon Bonaparte, notwithstanding all his despotism and ambition, appears at times to have imbibed a better spirit. He showed this in the abhorrence in which he held such characters as Robespierre and Barere. We see it also in a certain groping after improvements on a great scale in Europe—but never perhaps do we find it more manifest than in something like an aspiration after a national system of education, and a regret, which on one occasion he is said to have expressed, that *there were not mothers to carry it into effect.* We have no wish to eulogise the professional teachers of Scotland for the great exertions they have made in speeding forward the cause of education, because there has been

perhaps too much of this, more especially when we look to a higher standard of excellence, than what this or the other country furnishes, in the present state of the world. The truth is, there is no class of men in any nation whatever that has much to boast of in the matter of education, for where so much remains yet to be done, it is unwise to doat upon the past. It were a nobler policy to anticipate the future, to forget the things which are behind, and to press on to the things which are before. There is, however, one class of agents, who, if they have been unpatronised, have been highly efficient in carrying on, as far as concerned them, the work of education in Scotland, and education of that kind which is generally longest remembered—we refer here to the christian women of that country. Inheriting that best of all legacies, the blessing and example of a pious parentage, they have been careful not to loose that good thing which was committed to them, we mean the knowledge of divine truth, but to transmit it to their children; and tracing effects to their causes, we would say, that if the great reading public in Europe and in America have been in any measure edified by that noble poem in which Pollok afterwards poured forth the sympathies of his lofty genius, they owe it in no inconsiderable degree to the early training of Margaret Dickie, his own mother. Robert's next instructor was Mr. Andrew Jackson, the teacher of the parish. He continued at his school from his eighth to his fifteenth year. As he was often, however, required to assist his father in agricultural operations, his education appears to have been carried on with but little efficiency, if we may judge from the few branches he seems to have studied. These were Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, with little or no Grammar; and, perhaps, considering the occupation for which Robert at this time was intended, namely, that of cultivating a small farm, as his father and grandfather had done before him, the education he had received was not unsuitable, and more especially when it is remembered that at this time his friends just imagined they were dealing with an ordinary boy, and never seem to have thought that he possessed those fine powers of fancy, which afterwards enabled him to occupy such a distinguished place among the masters of sacred song.

Many individuals have had occasion to lament the untoward accidents that befal them in early life. The subject of this memoir, as we shall immediately see, was of this number. While attending a public school, he became an innocent sufferer in consequence of the violent disposition of one of his companions. It may be observed that, like other boys of like years, young Pollok was extremely fond of sports and play. In these he engaged with the greatest eagerness, and he is said to have excelled all his compeers in feats of strength and agility. At this time it is very common to find boys given to all kinds of mischief—so much is this the case in some schools where the children are not impressed with a sense of religious obligation, that it is really one of the most grievous evils. The children of the careless and of the diligent alike are brought together—and as it was in the old times, when Ishmael discharged his shafts of malicious ridicule against Isaac, so it is still—the weak too often suffers by the strong, and the timid by the reckless. The poet Cowper, it is well known, was so grievously annoyed by the tyrannical conduct of certain of his school-mates, that his life was rendered absolutely miserable; and when he became a man, he wrote a satirical poem against public Seminaries, which, if it proves anything at all, would certainly prove that they are a national evil.

"Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once;

That in good time the stripling's finish'd taste
For loose expense and fashionable waste,
Should prove your ruin or your own at last,
Train him in public with a mob of boys,
Childish in mischief only and in noise.
* * * * * * *
The weak and bashful boy will soon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought,
The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
* * * * * * *
And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause
If you can crown a discipline that draws
Such mischief after it with much applause."

And certainly few people acquainted with public Seminaries will refuse to admit that many boys are to be found there of such depraved feelings that they often injure or corrupt their fellows. We would willingly hope, however, that there is some improvement. At all events the abuses which may arise out of Seminaries, supposing they are good otherwise, is no reason why they should be set aside. Mere private teaching does not introduce a young man to a knowledge of the world, and this is a branch of knowledge of such importance that it cannot well be dispensed with. Since, however, the evils arising from bad companions are so generally acknowledged, something of a practical kind might be done in order to remove them. Our systems of education are all too intellectual. Why should there not be the moral training as well as the intellectual? Why might not a special hour be set apart in the week for a Minister or Elder visiting the school, and giving some special counsel of a moral and religious kind suitable to the relations in which the pupils stand. It is well known that the supporters of the Normal system of training claim no small credit to it from this single consideration, that they, *par excellence*, train the moral faculties of the child according to the Scripture rule; but if moral training be a good thing, as it confessedly is, why not have it in every system? why not have an hour once or twice a-week for picturing out the moral lessons which a parable or other interesting part of Scripture may contain. Moral truth is the natural and appointed safeguard against immoral doings of whatever kind they may be, and most assuredly the system which is without that branch has in it a defect that nothing can supply. The incident we are about to record, perhaps, may be held as warranting this digression. Though at the period of life to which we now refer, the young poet, as we have hinted above, was full of fun and frolic, he was incapable of doing an injury to any of his school-fellows—this did not save him from suffering by the hand of another who was less gentle in his disposition. He had been associated with a robust boy some three years older than himself in a game which depended on fleetness in running. His antagonist gave chase with such eagerness as to show he meant to run him down. Young Pollok, on his part too, not to be outdone, fled with all his might. The run was a close one; a rivulet intervened in their path; Robert, all breathless as he was, could scarce clear it with a leap, and when he looked round to see if he was still pursued, he perceived that his fierce competitor had sunk down on the farther bank, thereby confessing his defeat. It may perhaps be thought by some individuals that an incident of this kind is too trivial to be noticed, but in the lives of men it is often found that great results arise out of small things. So

it was in the present instance. From this hour Robert contracted a pain in his side and breast which, though often alleviated, never left him, until, in combination with other causes, it brought him, in the noon of his hopes, to an early grave! It is perhaps also worthy of record, what is noticed by his brother, that "after this running he lost his white and ruddy complexion, for which he was before remarkable, and became pale." There are few things that dissipate the dream of childhood more quickly than the death of relatives. The affections of a boy in his sixteenth or seventeenth year are as lively as when he becomes a man. And supposing he forms few serious thoughts of death, one thing he knows of it, that he has lost forever in this world a dear friend. The death of Robert's sister, Mrs. Young, when he was about this age, appears to have deeply impressed him. The author still remembered it when penning his immortal poem, for he interwove with it this affecting episode. We shall here copy the passage, because, apart from its poetical merits, it may have a peculiar interest in the estimation of the reader, as embalming Mr. Pollok's thoughts and feelings on a very trying occasion in early life:—

"Our sighs were numerous and profuse our tears,
For she we lost was lovely, and we loved
Her much. Fresh in our memory, as fresh
As yesterday, is yet the day she died.
It was an April day; and blithely all
The youth of nature leaped beneath the sun,
And promised glorious manhood: and our hearts
Were glad, and round them danced the lightsome blood,
In healthy merriment: when tidings came
A child was born, and tidings came again
That she who gave it birth was sick to death.
So swift trod sorrow on the heels of joy!
We gathered round her bed and bent our knees
In fervent supplication to the throne
Of mercy; and perfumed our prayers wtth sighs
Sincere, and penitential tears and looks
Of self-abasement: but we sought to stay
An angel on the earth, a spirit ripe
For Heaven; and mercy, in her love, refused,
Most merciful, as oft, when seeming least!
Most gracious when she seemed the most to frown!
The room I well remember, and the bed
On which she lay, and all the faces too
That crowded dark and mournfully around.
Her father there and mother, bending, stood,
And down their aged cheeks fell many drops
Of bitterness: her husband too was there,
And brothers, and they wept: her sisters too
Did weep and sorrow comfortless: and I
Too wept, though not to weeping given; and all
Within the house was dolorous and sad.
This I remember well: but better still
I do remember, and will ne'er forget,
The dying eye! That eye alone was bright,
And brighter grew, as nearer death approached.

As I have seen the gentle little flower
Look fairest in the silver beam which fell
Reflected from the thunder cloud, that soon
Came down, and o'er the desert scattered far
And wide its loveliness. She made a sign
To bring her babe: 'twas brought and by her placed;
She looked upon its face that neither smiled
Nor wept, nor knew who gazed thereon, and laid
Her hand upon its little breast, and sought
For it, with look that seemed to penetrate
The Heavens, unutterable blessings, such
As God to dying parents only granted,
For infants left behind them in the world.
'God keep my child!' we heard her say, and heard
No more: the Angel of the Covenant
Was come; and faithful to his promise stood,
Prepared to walk with her through death's dark vale.
And now her eyes grew bright, and brighter still,
Too bright for ours to look upon, suffused
With many tears—and closed without a cloud:
They set as sets the morning star, which goes
Not down behind the darkened West, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
And melts away into the light of Heaven.

Taking into account that these verses truly describe the scene as it appeared to young Pollok, and to the lady's other relatives, we see in the fulness with which he expatiates over it, what a deep impression the sad incident had made upon the heart and mind of the poet. But here it is proper we should direct the attention of the reader to another phasis of things. There can be no doubt that external nature also has much to do with the development of genius, and we should be greatly wanting in giving anything like an adequate view of the influences which operated on the active and observing mind of Mr. Pollok, if we did not take into account the early scenes among which he roamed when a boy. It is common with ignorant people to conceive of genius as consisting merely in a capacity for composing with a certain degree of ease and elegance. Reflecting perhaps on the many books which they have heard poets have written, they take the mere *material* as the basis on which they form their opinion, and they judge of the poet's powers of intellect and of fancy accordingly. It thus happens that were you to question such persons as to what they thought of Genius, you would find that they conceive it to be a thing of art, a certain aptness for throwing one's thoughts into metre, or what is just as likely, a sort of itch for writing which can never be gratified enough. But every one who has appreciated the true nature of poetry knows well that such views as these are extremely mean and inadequate. Let us listen to the views which the great Bard of Avon held on this subject. The verses, we are aware, have been often quoted, but they are still fresh and beautiful:—

"The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

Let me ask those persons, then, to whom we have just alluded, what it is in these verses that strikes them as most noticeable. The Bard we have quoted does not put the power of versifying foremost, as they probably would have done, had they written on the genius of a poet. He speaks only of the poet's eye, meaning by this the spiritual eye as well as the material organ. We say, therefore, that sensibility is a remarkable trait in the character of a true Poet: in other words, his mind is easily awakened by external nature. Accordingly, we find a female poet expressing this idea with great propriety of diction:—

"Cold and inert the mental powers would be
Without this quickening spark of Deity,
To give immortal mind its finest tone—
Oh, sensibility is all thine own!"

Seeing, therefore, we have undertaken to make the reader acquainted with the highly interesting life of the Author of the Course of Time, he must not think that we are going far out of our way if we direct his attention to the scenes amid which the youthful poet first saw the light of day, and on which his eye never opened but he experienced a feeling of pleasure or of joy. We have ourselves witnessed these scenes which are now classic ground in Scotland, but we saw them only in part and at a distance, when sailing down the frith of Clyde towards the western ocean, and the free shores of Columbia. We must therefore have recourse to another for our description, and in this case we are happy in having a Topographer in all respects capable of gratifying our curiosity. Mr. Pollok's brother speaks to the following effect as to the locality. "Mid Moorhouse, which is said to have been built before the battle of Bannockburn, is situated about a quarter of a mile to the south-east of North Moorhouse, and was adorned in Robert's time with eight old trees, four of which, 'three ash and one of elm,' were 'tall' as well as old.* It stands on an open, elevated, hilly country, diversified with moor and dale, and surrounded in the distance with lofty mountains. The view from the house and different parts of the farm, which, notwithstanding its name, contains no moors, but is all either arable or meadow ground, is extensive, varied, and magnificent. It is terminated on the east and south by various hills and moorland heights, from a mile to three miles distant; and from the west round to the north east, along an outline of bold mountains, it varies in range from forty to eighty or ninety miles; and within that range the whole face of the country is undulating and picturesque. But the prospect from some of its neighbouring heights which Robert, from his childhood, often visited, is much more extensive, and is still more varied and magnificent. The principal of these heights, and one which comprehends the view from all the rest, is Balagich, the highest hill in the upper part of Renfrewshire. It lies nearly a mile and a half to the south of Moorhouse, and rises a thousand feet above the level of the sea. The prospect from it varies in range from forty to ninety, or a hundred miles; and the circumfereuce of it, which cannot be less than three or four hundred, consists of lofty mountains. To the east, over extensive tracts of moors, rises Tinto, and beyond it appear, in the distance, Walston Mount, Culter Fell, and Cardon. On the south east and south, a vast moor, memor-

* The Elm, it appears, has since been blown down, but the three Ashes are still standing.

able for the meetings and hallowed by the graves of martyrs, stretches out to Wardlaw and Cairntable, Black Craig, Windy Standard, Cairnsmore, and Carsphairn, and the Buchan hills in Galloway. South west and west the view expands over the green hills of Carrick, the grassy hills of Kyle and Cunningham, and the spreading waters of the Frith of Clyde to Ailsa Craig, Arran, and the Peaks of Jura, which look out upon the Atlantic Ocean. On the north west, and round to the north east, the rich pastoral and arable lands of Renfrew and Lanarkshire slope gently down to the fertile vale of the Clyde, opening below the eye like a vast basin, in which are seen Paisley and Glasgow, with their numerous suburbs, and from which the face of the country rises irregularly—sometimes gradually, and sometimes abruptly—to Ben Cruachan, Ben Lomond, Ben Ledi, Ben-voirlich, Uam-Var, and the beautiful range of the Ochil hills." It would require, however, the pencil of the Artist to convey anything like an adequate idea of this goodly panorama: and here we may just remark, in passing, that if the reader has ever been enchanted by that noble ease with which our poet expatiates on scenes of Paradisaical beauty in the Course of Time, he should keep in mind that the whole is not an airy picture too bright for reality, but that the poet's imagination had been sustained in its loftiest efforts by these natural scenes to which reference is made in the passage quoted above. But to proceed with our narrative.

It appears that Robert was first led to cherish higher thoughts than what belonged to an agriculturist, by meeting accidentally with an odd number of the Spectator. He had been accustomed to hear this book much commended as containing specimens of good writing; and no sooner had he got it into his hands than we are told he retired into the fields, sat down, and perused a paper with great care and attention. After this he closed the book, saying he thought he could write like that. No sooner said than done. He commenced operations, and made the notable discovery, for the first time, that the gift of writing was not restricted to the wits who figured during the reign of Queen Anne. Such is the incident noticed by his brother. We may, however, without any breach of charity, suppose, that the imperfect scrawl which a boy sitting in the fields could make, would not bear any strong resemblance to the least of the papers composed by such masters as Steel or Addison. The very thought, however, of acquiring distinction by his pen at some future period, (for we presume this was all he meant to say) on the part of a boy who had spent much of his time in mere bodily toil, was honourable to his decision of character. It indicated this quality, we think, in a high degree. It displayed a certain consciousness of power which needed only manifestation. From this incident, it may be noticed, dates Mr. Pollok's intention of becoming an Author. At this time he seems to have been in his sixteenth year.

There are few countries in the world in which a greater craving for becoming Ministers exists than among the sons of the middle classes in Scotland. To "wag his head in a Pulpit" is an exercise which has peculiar attractions in their esteem. We remember a friend once telling us a case which fell under his observation. A certain grown up man who had a wife to provide for, was suddenly seized with an uncommon desire for preaching the Gospel. Nothing short of this would satisfy him. It was in vain that it was suggested to him that there were plenty of Ministers already, and that very probably he could not hope to throw more light upon the Scriptures than was done by them. He made little answer to all this, but proceeded to calumniate his present calling: and what does the gentle reader think it was? It was the highly

useful and honourable one of a Ploughman! Sandy, however, in his new-born zeal, saw it in a different light; for, as he told his friends, while he held the stilts of the plough, he was no more glorifying God than the horses which drew it! This was enough—therefore he must preach! Now who can doubt that vanity, in such a case, was the ruling motive of the man—if it was not, the reason given for justifying a change, was of the most insignificant kind,—it is positively false in principle. God is glorified by the flower growing in the lonely desert, and surely in a higher degree by the very humblest christian remaining faithful in his calling. We would not, however, wish to say, that in every case a man is under the influence of vanity in leaving his profession to join the ranks of Preachers; but knowing, as we do, the deceitfulness of the human heart, we certainly say that the reasons should be carefully examined, lest as in the case of the ploughman just noticed, they may be of such a kind as to warrant the apprehension that they are founded in sheer vanity. And here, speaking of this subject, we may notice an incident which occurred while we were ourselves attending the classes in St. Andrew's College. There were at this time two eccentric persons enrolled among the *Alumni;* they had been both of them ploughmen; one of them, too, was a poet in his own way—but both were so uncouth in their manners as to draw upon themselves the jeers of not a few of their compeers of the Fifan and Angusian nations, who had known them in former times. One of these mischief-loving urchins, by way of making known to all and sundry something concerning the history of the individuals referred to, (who, in respect of seniority, might have been their fathers,) pencilled, in the stair-case which led to Dr. Hunter's Class-Room, the following couplet:—

"Poet Cobb and William Moodie
Left the plough and came to study."

When a senior student, who had read the notificatiou, immediately wrote under it the following commentary:—

"William Moodie and Poet Cobb
Never tried a waur job!"

We have been told that when Dr. Hunter, who was always fond of a good joke, repeated the whole stanza at a meeting of the Senatus, it excited a hearty laugh. Notwithstanding all this, however, it is not to be denied that there are many most meritorious students who have left common occupations and attached themselves to a life of study for the sacred profession, whose labours and whose lives are worthy of being held in high esteem and everlasting remembrance, for the benefits they have conferred both on learning and religion. Of this class is Robert Pollok. In the autumn of 1815, when he was seventeen years of age, he resolved to begin his studies as a candidate for holy orders. For this end he required to commence the study of the Latin language; and such was the proficiency which he made, that in the course of seventeen months he seems to have been able to translate the poems of Virgil, by the help of a Dictionary, with considerable ease. His brother, whose mind had undergone a like change with his own, and had become a student along with him, informs us that he now, for the first time, read Pope's Essay on Man, and Milton's Paradise Lost,—the latter of which he seems to have made, like many other young persons who are fond of the marvellous, quite his favourite author. "He read more or less of him," (Milton) we are told, "almost every day; and used often to repeat aloud, in bed, immediately be-

fore rising in the morning, what was his favourite passage in Paradise Lost—the Apostrophe to light in the beginning of the book." The reader, we doubt not, remembers the passage, as it has found its way into almost all the "Gems of Poetry:"

> "Hail, holy light! offspring of Heaven first-born,
> Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam
> May I express thee unblamed? Since God is light,
> And never but in unapproached light
> Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee
> Bright effluence of bright essence uncreat." &c.

Mr. Pollok now, for the first time, began to write verses; and as is usual with the tuneful brethren, his lyre sang only of love. The following is a specimen. They are addressed "To Liza," a rustic beauty, who, it appears by her father's advice, had cast off a lover because of his "adverse fortune." His Biographer is careful to inform us that the personages are purely imaginary. We cannot help thinking, however, that they receive some additional interest from the consideration that the poet who had betaken himself to a profession that did not promise, for at least seven long years to come, to be the most productive, may have identified himself with the person who now speaks—this opinion, which is altogether according to the usual course of these matters, will be found to be confirmed by an allusion to "Liza," in a descriptive Essay, written while attending Professor Jardine's class. We shall notice this in the sequel. The name "Liza" is most likely an assumed name for the fair one; but had the blank been filled up which occurs in the sixth line of these verses, we do not doubt we should have had her true name. But the poet spared her! The verses are stiff and carelessly written; but a candid critic will acknowledge that while they have a certain naivete, there is in them much of the manner and feeling of a true poet. We take for granted, therefore, that it is the Author himself who speaks:—

> "O sweetest, fairest of the fairest sex!
> Virtue untainted dwells within thy breast.
> Too fair, too virtuous, if such things can be,
> Thou art; for thou hast wounded me, who heretofore
> Was wounded never, with such darts of love.
> ————————, why wast thou formed
> So fair? if so, why from my eyes not hid?
> Or rather why do I not thee possess?
> Since wanting thee unhappy—with thee blest.
> Alas! by fate, thou'rt to another doomed,
> To one who, by some inward pravity,
> Is without happiness, and thou with him;
> And I, for want of thee, unhappier.
> Had I of life thy partner been ordained,
> We to such happiness had reached below
> That thoughts had been by us of future bliss
> Neglected—our grand business in this world.
> Hence may we learn that disappointments here,
> And every cross, are blessings; blessings such
> As from this grovelling waste, to Heaven our thoughts
> Uplift, where happiness unmingled dwells.

To heaven conformed be then our mundane track,
That at a future day—transporting thought!—
Our Judge may be our Advocate: if so,
For evermore, in realms of peaceful love
We our abode shall have, where we'll enjoy
Pleasures abundant as is their great source,
Endless as he who lives eternally."

In the beginning of November, 1817, Mr. Pollok, being now in his nineteenth year, entered the University of Glasgow as a student. He attended the Greek and Latin classes—the former, at that time, taught by Dr. Young, one of the most accomplished Greek scholars of his time, and the Author of an elaborate Critique on Gray's Elegy; and the latter class taught by Professor Walker, Author of a didactic poem, entitled "A Defence of Order," directed against the principles of Revolutionary France. We can hardly think, therefore, considering that Mr. Pollok was one who cultivated the Muses, that he could have been placed under teachers better fitted to give him counsel as to the best mode of initiating himself into their graces. The writer of this, when a boy, remembers seeing Dr. Young in the Theatre of Glasgow, when the famous Kean was acting one of the characters of Shakspeare, and such were his susceptibilities for being impressed, that when the actor came to any impressive passage, the venerable Professor was immediately bathed in tears. We have heard his students also say of him that it was such a treat to hear him read the Iliad for the same reason. That the Poet had improved under the prelections of his distinguished teachers will appear by comparing the following verses which he wrote for Professor Walker's class with those above given. They are addressed to the Sun:—

"Hail, thou immortal source of light!
At thy approach the gloomy night
Ashamed shrinks from thy ray;
The moon, submissive, disappears,
And all the planets in their spheres
Are lost in whiter ray.

The lion quits the brightening plain,
And all the nightly prowling train
Now fear the blood they've spilt:
Rebellion, riot, wild misrule,
Night's progeny of mischief full,
Fly conscious of their guilt.

Hark how the grateful sons of day
Extol the penetrating ray
That banishes their dread;
In tuneful notes the feather'd throng
Melodious pour the early song,
And every leaf is glad.

The bleating flocks, the lowing kine,
In rougher notes the concert join,
As gaily wide they graze;

The fields all waving richly gay,
The flowers unfolding to thy ray,
Though silent, smile thy praise.

Now from his couch upstarts the swain,
And sprightly hurries o'er the plain,
To see what night has done;
With heartfelt joy his flocks among,
He joins the universal song,
'Hail, ever bounteous Sun!'"

An incident here occurred which, as it indicates the spirit of the Poet, we should not wish to pass over unnoticed. It so happened that Robert had given in three Poetical Exercises, (for it is usual to receive these, as well as prose ones,) to the Professor; and although the common practice is that the Professor either reads such exercises to the class himself, or gives them to the Author to read, for some reason or other, in this instance he did neither, but merely marked on the back of one of the exercises, "*Some of these verses are spirited.*" "Why then," said Robert, the moment he read the words, "Why then not read them to the class?" The Poet felt the oversight rather keenly, but he improved it to some advantage, for he now for the first time began to think of looking for distinction from a wider society than what a class-room contains. He began to anticipate nobler and more lasting honours from the world without.

We believe there are no students in the world who work harder than those of a certain class in Scotland—conscious that in their earlier years they have lost much precious time through a misdirection of their views, they study day and night, in order to make it up, and to sustain their reputation among students farther advanced. All this is done at a great sacrifice of comfort, and frequently of health—so that the case of KirkeWhite, so feelingly alluded to by Lord Byron, in his Poem of English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, is a matter of very common occurrence in that country. As the young men have a long spell at their studies, the approach of the first of May is hailed with rejoicing, because then they are set free from their privations and labors, and allowed to retire to their homes in the country for the next six months to come. It may be observed, however, that to many of them even the summer brings no release; for while prosecuting their studies and performing all the prescribed exercises allotted for the recess, they must in many cases support themselves.

The return of November brought the subject of this Memoir up to Glasgow to his second session. He attended the Greek class and an Elocution class taught by J. S. Knowles, Esquire, under whom he is said to have made considerable improvement. During the following summer, while residing at Moorhouse, Mr. Pollok appears to have contemplated with some degree of interest his attendance at the Logic class, for he seems to have bestowed more time than usual on English reading. The Logic class in these days to which we now refer, was taught by Professor Jardine. His external appearance at first sight—for he was very stout—would have scarcely impressed one with the idea that he was a great philosopher. He was, however, perhaps one of most successful Lecturers in his own department, and certainly the most popular Teacher that was then to be found in Great Britain. He drew his students from both England and Ireland, and they usually amounted, we believe, to some three or four hundred. He was well advanced in years at this

time, but it was really a treat to see the fine old Professor leaning over his desk, and in the most familiar manner informing the students, by means of Lectures, which seemed altogether extemporaneous, of the powers of the human mind, and of the technicalities of logic. When he had the happiness to visit the Logic class, it was perfectly crowded; and though the auditors were at that period of life when it is no easy task for a teacher to preserve among them a due respect for authority, yet such was the veneration in which Mr. Jardine was held, that one frown upon some idler, who was perhaps drawing a caricature of one of his fellow-students, and thereby exciting a sensation about him, was enough; the offender was fain to dissemble the task about which he had been busy, and would make an appearance of uncommon zeal in taking notes of the lecture in his note-book. The tie which bound the students to their teacher was love and respect. This was manifest from the manner in which numbers of them, in their scarlet gowns, clustered about the desk. There they sat, for the time being, with a gravity which contrasted strangely with their usual love for noise and merriment; some with their heads bent down while they were writing out what they had just heard, and others in listening mood, with their eyes fixed on the speaker, and with mouth slightly open, presenting a picture both of zeal for knowledge and of high gratification, as well as of surprize at the novelty of the views and illustrations which were submitted to their attention. With such an arena before him for excelling, and more interesting as each student had the fullest freedom for displaying his talents in composition, whatever they might be, we cannot wonder that Mr. Pollok should be sedulous in making preparation during the months of summer by a course of English reading. At this time, too, he seems to have been wholly freed from the task of working on the farm, and he sought to amuse himself during the intervals of study by excursions to the neighbouring heights, from whence he could behold, beneath and around him, a landscape in which nature and art combined their powers to produce one glorious expression of magnificence and beauty. To use his own words on this matter:—

> "It was indeed a wondrous sort of bliss
> The lonely bard enjoyed, when forth he walked,
> Unpurposed."

It appears that Mr. Pollok, on joining the Logic class in November, 1819, was peculiarly industrious. He wrote all the Essays which the Professor prescribed to the young men, and which were usually three in the week;—these Essays were on subjects on which the Professor had previously been lecturing, and were admirably fitted for impressing more deeply upon the minds of the young men the expositions to which they had been listening, as well as of accustoming them to express themselves with ease and correctness in their own language, while along with these advantages, they enabled the Professor to judge of the students' progress at all times. It must, however, have been no light matter to peruse such a multitude of these productions, and as Mr. Jardine submitted to the drudgery, no other motive could have sustained him than a high regard for his students, as well perhaps as zeal for the dissemination of knowledge and of education over the earth. It was the custom of Mr. Jardine, after the students had been trained in some measure to composition, by writing all the previous exercises, towards the end of the session, to require the students to write an Essay at greater length. The subject of this was not like the others, given out by the Professor, but the students were allowed to choose it for themselves. It was held to be a trial of their attain-

ments "in thinking and composition," and belonged rather to the department of Rhetoric than of Logic—for Mr. Jardine taught both. Mr. Pollok wrote this Essay along with many of his fellow-students. The subject of it is a real or imaginary Tour to his native place, on leaving College at the end of the Session. The young tourist represents himself as having wandered among the moors, and been obliged to spend the night in the open air in a dark night, which is graced in his narrative with a thunder storm, and some ludicrous adventures with ghosts or fairies. The following is the description of the morning after it had began to dawn around him:—"The harbingers of the morning now began to scatter the night. In my earlier years it was my chief delight to observe the rising sun in a summer morning. I found myself still captivated with the purple tinges of the east. My eyes followed these beautiful visitants of the morning, while they travelled over to the west. My soul was pleased. Is it, said I, to call forth man early to his duty and to delight him at the same time that the Omnipotent thus beautifies the morning? How wise and how good to man is the Almighty! who would not love and obey so good a Lord?" * * * * "I looked round about me and saw that I was at the very border of a cultivated country blooming in all the vigour of commencing summer. But a little while ago all this was covered with darkness. I turned my eyes towards the sun, and although I am no poet, as you know, my thoughts, I do not know how, fell into the form of verse in the following manner."—And here he introduces the Address to the Sun given above, which he had written for Professor Walker's class. "My thoughts," he continues, "were now all bent on home, and I turned my steps back into the uncultivated country, following the course of a winding river. After I had proceeded about two miles in this direction my course was stopped. Here the stream rushed from a rock, forming a beautiful arch. A few yards below this water-fall was a little grove, situated in a kind of peninsula, described by the windings of the river. The hills rose quickly on every side;—here I was hid from every eye. How favourable is this place, said I, for tender lovers! Here the youthful pair might breathe out the fervent tale unseen, save by approving Heaven. I surveyed the place attentively. It was the very same which I had heard so often renowned as the spot in which Melvan and Liza spent their happy hours, before the tyrant father of Liza separated her forever from Melvan's adverse fortune. Here Melvan had often talked love with his fair consenting Liza; and hither he often resorted after she was made the wife of another. I reclined myself a few minutes in the little grove. This, said I, was perhaps the favourite seat of the lovers. In a little opening, in the trunk of a weeping birch, close by my side, I discerned a slip of paper. It was probably left by Melvan in some of his solitary visits to the grove. It contained a few lines addressed to Liza. The language is somewhat harsh, and a few of the terms bear marks of the schools; but Melvan was not unlearned. As these lines show the happy effect of piety or disappointed love, they may perhaps not be unpleasing to you." (See page 14.) The Author proceeds:—"After spending a few minutes in this sequestered spot, I climbed to the top of an eminence, whence I discerned, at a little distance, a road which led to my native place. Thither I directed my steps; and about six o'clock I arrived at my father's house. The family were all up; for here people have not yet learned the unnatural fashion of living in the night, and slumbering away the day. I was received as I knew I would be: every countenance, every hand, every tongue, welcomed my arrival."

It is needless here to observe, that all this was written while Robert was

pent up in one of those humble lodgings in the neighbourhood of the College, in which students, whose pockets are not over plenished with money, are usually found residing. Many a reference has been made to the hardships which the sons of Scottish peasants have undergone in their zeal to acquire the learning necessary to fit them for becoming Preachers of the Gospel. Indeed it may truly be said, that the wired-up bird, which has been accustomed, in the months of summer, to flutter about among the flowery fields, and to perch upon every tree, warbling out its little heart in joyful melody, does not long more ardently for being freed from its prison-house, that it may again join itself amongst the other feathered songsters of its kind, than the toil-worn student longs to return to his father's house, and to the scenes of his infancy. It is true that the sense of duty—the consciousness that his parents expect him to be diligent, and to spend aright that season for mental improvement which it costs them not a few privations to procure for him, not to mention the anticipations of future distinction,—form motives powerful enough to keep him at his books and studies; but in the midst of all these, other thoughts will intrude, and, perhaps, while grinding in his narrow chamber at Homer or Demosthenes, or wasting the midnight oil over a mathematical theorem, his thoughts in a moment will be far away among the haunts of his boyhood. He loaths the smoke and din, and the thousand annoyances of the great commercial city in which his lot is cast, and he longs for the woodlands and solitudes of nature. That such was the frame of mind of Pollok at this period will be manifest to the reader, from the passages we have copied from the Essay noticed above. A poem also which he wrote while attending the classes in Glasgow is an illustration of the same kind; it is entitled "ODE TO MOORHOUSE," and we shall here copy it, not so much for the sake of its poetical merits, but because it supplies us with an illustration of his feelings while a student in Glasgow:—

"Far from the giddy, cheerless crowd
That press the streets, thoughtless and loud,
In ancient majesty arrayed,
Time-worn Moorhouse, thou stand'st displayed.
Thy walls irregular could tell
At Bannockburn what numbers fell;
How Bruce, with strong resistless hand,
From proud oppression saved his land.

When Popes and Kings in hellish rage
By persecution thinned the age,
Thy walls a faithful shelter proved,
To those that God and virtue loved.
Oft in the silent midnight hour,
When listening Heaven's almighty power,
With ear inclined, delighted, hears
The good man's prayers, and wipes his tears.
Within thy walls assembled saints
Praised him who wearies not nor faints;
Praised him who sheathed the bloody sword,
And, undisturbed, his name adored,
And angels joined the ascending song,
Wafting it to the eternal throng.

The lofty trees that by thee grow,
A supplicating look bestow
On me, a stripling easy laid,
Within their hospitable shade;
And sighing say, 'The kindly hand
That gave us birth in this blest land,
Centuries ago lies in the dust,
O do not thou betray thy trust!
Us gently prune with feeling hand,
Nor to destroy us give command
Thy fathers now above the sky,
Watched o'er us with paternal eye;
O to our age some reverence yield!
Nor envy us this little field.

Around untainted zephyrs blow,
And purling rills unfailing flow,
And Earn's pure stream with gentle waves
Unceasingly thy border laves.
The smiling herds that graze thy plain
Of drink or pasture ne'er complain;
Their wintry food thy meadows yield,
Secured ere Boreas beats the field;
The joyful, waving, yellow plains
Ne'er baulk the labour of the swains.

O happy dome! placed far remote
From city toils and treason's plot;*
The city smoke ne'er reached the plain
Which suffocates the motley train;
Far from the crimes that rage unnamed,
From which the day retires ashamed;
Far from the breezes fraught with death,
Far from contagion's mortal breath,
Happy the swains who in thee live,
Who read their Bibles and believe;
Who worship God with heart and mind,
And to his will are aye resigned!"

At the conclusion of the session Mr. Pollok, by the suffrages of his fellow-students of the Logic class, was awarded one of the prizes. On retiring to his father's house (May, 1820) we find him, in a letter to his brother, dated 13th June of the same year, complaining of depression and want of sleep, doubtless the fruits of over exertion in the campaign of the previous session. "My situation," he says, "is indeed not agreeable. To be aiming at literature without adequate assistance is a hard task; but to be without adequate assistance and stimulating health is harder still. When I look to the scholar's unprotected fate, and think that even at this season of the year my health is rather retrograde, the prospect is indeed gloomy. I have not spoken of the state of my health to any person here, but the lowness of my spirits is no doubt visible. My constitution is yet strong and far from being sickly. Dr.

* This seems to be an allusion to the efforts made at this time, on the part of a party called the Radical Reformers, to overturn the Government.

Reid, the last time I saw him, said there was no danger whatever; and recommended residing a month or two on Arran, (a romantic island in the Frith of Clyde) and taking occasional sails. The rarety of the air, in that quarter, would probably have a good effect on the mind; and the sea bathing, which I never tried, might have an influence of some kind on the body. But to go there and be comfortable requires money; and you know that is not to be found. Were I even to get it here, I know so well their inability to assist me, that every shilling which I spend tortures my soul. I do not write this to hurt your feelings, but it gives me some pleasure to communicate my own feelings to you, and at the same time to have your advice in return will afford me satisfaction." Instead of going to Arran, Mr. Pollok, along with another young gentleman, went over to Ireland, and visited Dublin. It does not appear, however, that the poet found much in the Green Isle to excite his fancy, as his brother informs us that no notice of it occurs in any of his papers,—if we except a single poetical stanza, "written in Phœnix Park:"

"All Nature here to please conspires,
And Art combines her varied powers;
Here doubly burn the lover's fires,
For love itself hath formed these bowers."

On his return to Moorhouse we find the poet resuming his pen to celebrate one of his female friends in the neighbourhood. Writing to a correspondent, and before launching forth in her praise, he prefaces his epistle with these verses:—

"Moorhouse, *August* 18, 1820.

"Dear friend, one moment quit the classic page,
The modern theorist and the ancient sage,
With all the depth of philosophic lore
Through which your eye has long been taught to pore.
A brighter theme, the Muse devoid of fear,
Presses upon your unaccustomed ear.
The theme's Maria—who will not attend
When all the Muses, unimplored, descend?
For when the virtuous fair our theme compose,
The Muses listen though we speak in prose."

We wish that we could have afforded space to copy the whole of this "Prose" document, for it is really a curiosity in its way; we fear, however, our fair readers would not much fancy it, as we well know they do not wish to become objects of admiration to mere Platonic philosophers, and therefore we are the more reconciled to an epitome. Maria then "has been a successful scholar in the various branches of female education; her form is handsome, and might measure something about middle size. Her hair is black, and sports in luxuriant ringlets on a forehead and neck of a polish and whiteness which arrest the eye of the most careless beholder. Her eyes are blue, and are met with ease and pleasure always full of the goodness of her heart. Maria's colour is not high, nor is she fashionably pale. The air of her countenance is attractive and easy. Goodness will gaze on her with freedom and delight; wickedness will withdraw its eye ashamed and reproved. She possesses the sensibility and gentleness of the country maid, without her awkwardness or ignorance; and the refinement and activity of the town's lady, without her whimsicalness or deception. Unable to call myself by the tender name

of her friend, I am only an acquaintance. A more intimate connexion might discover some faults; but no connexion could reasonably discover faults which would not be lost almost sooner than seen, in that blaze of goodness which pervades every part of her character. As the spots which are said to exist in the sun are lost in the bright effulgence of his beams, so Maria's faults, if she have any, are completely hidden in the despreading luxuriance of her goodness; and as the spots in the sun are no obstruction to his cheering, vivifying, and day-making influences on the earth, so Maria's faults can be no hindrance to her pleasing, animating, and soul-brightening influences on those around her. How delightful is it to see youth, and beauty, and goodness, combined in the same female! What an irresistible power over mankind have justice and religion when enforced by so winning an admonisher! Were there sufficient Maria's in the world, what respect were due to the female character! How much would the eternal interests of mankind be promoted! How more rational and satisfactory were the pleasures pursued in the world! Then were Lemuel's description of a good wife applicable; then were domestic jarring at an end; then might it be universally said, 'He that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing.'"

In connexion with the above, we may here insert a passage from a common-place book which he kept about this time. The author wishes to find out all the probable causes which lead "Men to become bachelors." He says: "This catastrophe comes about from these various causes: 1. Some from thoughtlessness and carelessness. 2. Some from early disappointments. 3. Some from the hurry of business. 4. Some from picturing too much to themselves all the evils that may attend marriage. 5. Some from a narrow worldly spirit, which cannot think to share the bounties of Providence with another." During this summer, also, he wrote an Essay prescribed by Professor Jardine, "On the External Senses, and the means of improving them." This exercise must have occupied a considerable portion of the season, as we are informed by his brother that it extends to 104 quarto pages; and it must have been gratifying to the feelings of its Author that it was esteemed by the Professor worthy of carrying off the prize.

In November, 1820, Mr. Pollok resumed his studies at Glasgow. He now enrolled himself a student at the Moral Philosophy. This class was taught by Professor Milne, a gentleman, who, though his theological sentiments were not generally approved of, held a high reputation as a profound metaphysician and able lecturer. Although moral philosophy was the strict department which belonged to Mr. Milne, yet it might rather be said that he lectured on *mental* philosophy. Like Dr. Reid, he confined himself in a great measure to what was called an analysis of the powers and faculties of the human mind—the great object of the teacher being to discover and unfold its first principles. The taste of the public for discussions of this kind, has of late years greatly abated—partly, it is believed, from a deep conviction that they are in a great measure unprofitable—and partly from a growing conviction that the mode of investigation by analysis, does not apply where mind is the subject as well as the instrument. To all this it may be added, that men had become familiar with seeing one system-maker after another, who had demolished the work of his predecessors, being doomed in turn to be demolished by him that followed; so that the conclusion was in a manner forced upon them, that metaphysics were founded in fancy—that the inquirer either did not know with sufficient clearness what was the end he was aiming at, or if he did, that he had wandered from the proper path. We would wish to speak with all

charity of the imperfections of men of talent and genius, but we are constrained, after looking into the treatises on mental philosophy, by such distinguished individuals as Reid, Stewart, and Brown, to ask the question, what have they proved? where have been the discoveries which were to grace all our toils and labors? and Echo answers—where?

Professor Milne, besides lecturing on mental philosophy, lectured also occasionally on political economy; and in this latter branch his prelections were worthy of the Seminary which had originated that distinguished work, "The Wealth of Nations." His manner was unambitious; and apparently for the purpose of being comprehended by his students, he delivered his views in a conversational style. Whatever objections might be urged against the principle of his teaching—for the Professor was not understood to be the most orthodox—whatever he did teach, as far as we can now remember—for we have frequently heard him lecture—he sought to present in a luminous manner before the minds of his students. It was then, in this Professor's class, as we have said above, that Mr. Pollok was enrolled a student; the following is his own testimony to the improvement he made. "Till I heard Mr. Milne lecture, I never thought of calling in question the opinion of an author. If it differed from mine, I thought it must be right, and my own wrong. But in Mr. Milne's class I was set free for ever from the trammels of book-authority; I lost all deference to authors and opinions and names; and learned not only to think for myself, but to test severely my own opinions." The most that we would say of this is, that according to his own confession, Mr. Pollok merely passed from one extreme to another. Before, he never thought of calling in question the opinion of an author; but after hearing Mr. Milne, he had lost all deference for authors together; for our own part, on the supposition that unsound authors are kept out of the way, we should have said that the former state of mind was to be preferred, and that the old was better than the new.—It appears that Mr. Pollock took large notes, while attending this class. His brother informs us that he had them preserved in "four octavo volumes, amounting to two hundred and thirty pages;" besides all this, he wrote twenty three Essays, averaging about eight quarto pages each. These labours sufficiently indicate the great diligence of Mr. Pollok; and we cannot wonder therefore that they should have called forth the approbation of his fellow students, in the shape of a prize conferred by their suffrages.

In the summer of 1821, after having spent four sessions at College, we find Mr. Pollok residing with his father at Moorhouse. As was usual with him, he made excursions at times into the country round about, in company with a friend—notes of these he occasionally inserted in his journal. We shall here favor the reader with an extract: "*Thursday, July* 5.—This morning I again opened my eyes on all the beauties of the banks of Ayr. After breakfast I set out with my friend towards a farm-house about two miles from the Ayr. In the meantime we walked over-arched with oak, and birch, and plane, and serenaded by all the music of the banks of Ayr, till we arrived at Barskimming, the seat of Lord Glenlee, (an eminent Judge of the Court of Session.) All the property of this gentleman bears strong marks of taste; and the nearer you approach his mansion the more conspicuous are these marks. Nature has provided him with a situation for a house of the most noble kind: and the grandeur and taste of the house add dignity to the place. I think Lord Glenlee's Library the most beautiful I have seen, if we take into consideration the combination of nature and art. The library contains about twelve thousand volumes. The carpet cost one hundred guineas. Every part of the

interior is finished in the most elegant manner imaginable; and three of the windows appear to overhang the water of Ayr, which is here ornamented as much as large trees, lofty banks, and singing birds can do."

In a letter written about much the same time as the above, we find Mr. Pollok, in giving counsel to his friend, as to the best mode for a Scottish student freeing himself of *Scotticisms*, strongly urging upon him the importance of *thinking* in English. Mr. Pollok sets himself to controvert the opinion of some, that because a Scotsman cannot express himself clearly and correctly in the English language, that therefore he is a dark and confused *thinker*; and the argument which he urges is, that the English is really a foreign language to the Scotsman—that he has been accustomed *to think* in the Scottish language—and therefore, however clear his thoughts may be, it need not be wondered at, if in a language that is foreign to them, they should appear confused. Now as Mr. Pollok happens to have been a Scotsman himself, and a sturdy one too, there may possibly be some little confusion of ideas in the paragraphs he has penned on this matter—such was our impression at least—but we stop not to notice this for the present. As Mr. Pollok usually describes external nature in his Course of Time, with great beauty, we shall here allow him to speak for himself on the matter of descriptive writing, for here he is more at home than on philosophy. "On a beautiful landscape," he says, "every one reflects with ease and delight. Every imagination readily represents the mass of objects of which the landscape is composed, and many are content with this confused review of it. The ideas which the landscape has produced in the mind are not properly formed into words—at least the language is of a mixed and barbarous kind. Reflection of this sort is easy, and this is all that indolence permits. But this is not thinking in English. To think in English, the landscape must be made to pass before the mind, not only as a whole, but every object must be viewed in connection with surrounding objects. We must view the streamlet leaping down from the rugged mountain, here lost under the embracing luxuriance of the hawthorn, the hazel, or the broom; then hurrying down the silvery rapid, bursting forth in a beautiful cascade. After you have conducted the waters to the adjoining plain, you must not leave them to wander alone. Nay, the beauty of the fields should be so fascinating as to induce the river to make a thousand meanders, as if unwilling to quit the scene. You must review its daisied sloping banks, richly clad with flocks and herds grazing in easy joy, or ruminating in safe repose. Look to the peaceful shepherd spreading his listless length beneath the blooming hawthorn, chanting in his artless reed, or, lost in love, gazing on the limpid stream, while his dog slumbers at his feet, or snaps at the encroaching fly. And a little down the stream you may venture half to reflect on the reclining form of the youthful shepherdess. A gentle birch might stretch forth its tremulous hands, turning aside the too violent sunbeams from the love-looking face of the guileless maid. Her bosom might heave with kind desires, and her eye long with hopeful modesty for the arrival of her lover. The daisy, the violet and cowslip, should smile redundant beauty, the kindest zephyrs regale her with their most delicate perfumes, the lark warble over her head, and the blackbird serenade her from the luxuriant elm. Now you must look at the river constrained between two rocks, boiling and roaring to get free, and then winding peacefully along the level plains and flowery meadows—cultivated nature waving richly with the hopes of the husbandman." Mr. Pollok proceeds to give certain rules for acquiring the art of descriptive writing; we may be excused, however, for

omitting them in this place. The truth is, Mr. Pollok is a much better poet than philosopher, and could not but know that the grand secret of excelling in this species of composition is to be found in the lively fancy of the writer; and if the images or types of external nature have awakened in the soul the sense of beauty, of the picturesque or sublime, every man who has received any sort of education at all, will seldom find language to fail him. The poet Burns affords us a fine illustration of what we now say; he was all alive to the beauties and harmonies of nature; and though a native of Scotia, and with but small pretensions to learning, he poured forth his feelings in the most appropriate language. The truth is, the theory of meditating on picturesque scenes, until a good English word occurred to represent every idea, is a pure conceit—a species of pedantry which would wither up the freshness of our poetry, and send us back the dactyls and spondees of a bygone age.

And here it is needful we should remark, that Mr. Pollok was not one of those literary characters who can find pleasure in nothing else but in scenes which regale his fancy—he was not a mere dreamer, whose sympathies have no fellowship with mankind in those matters which concern both their temporal and their eternal well-being On the contrary, Mr. Pollok's thoughts ran most in this latter channel. Being a Member of a Church which has been long distinguished for its zeal in behalf of scriptural truth, Mr. Pollok at an early age imbibed the same spirit from the sermons of her Ministers; and besides all this, made it a duty to read daily portions of the Sacred Volume. Accordingly, so far back as the year 1813, when he was in his fifteenth year, he gave indications that he had seen the importance of religion, and that he desired to regulate his conduct by its principles. His brother David, who was his companion from his infancy, informs us that he put the question to him as to the cause of this change, and Robert made answer, "that while perusing the Gospels for himself, he was struck with the meekness or calm dignity of the Saviour under provocation, and that he had resolved thenceforward to command his temper—and that since that time, though he might feel and express anger, nothing ever put him into a passion." Accordingly it appears that it was this love for the cause of the religion of the Bible, according to his understanding of it, which led him to give up the plough and to study for the Church of his fathers; and in this matter, notwithstanding all the untoward influences to which he was exposed in a large city, and among troops of thoughtless companions, he seems never to have fallen from his first love. His zeal for religion did not, as with too many students, commence when he was about to become a Preacher, or after he was established in a good fat living: on the contrary, Mr. Pollok was zealous in behalf of religious doctrine and practice from the very commencement of his studies. We have one proof of this in the fact, that in connection with his brother, while residing in a lodging-house in Glasgow, he was careful to assemble all the inmates in his apartment every evening for worship, at which he officiated, using, it would seem, that simple form so beautifully described in the Cotter's Saturday Night, and to which he had been accustomed in his father's house. Mr. Pollok also seems to have caught the Missionary spirit which blazed far and wide over Scotland at this time. The large towns, it is true, were the great centres in which it blazed most intensely; but as Pliny said of christianity, it was not confined to the cities, but had spread its infection (may *we* not rather say its warming influence?) "among the neighboring villages and country." Accordingly, in the retired village of Eaglesham, we find an Association existing at this time, whose object was to assist in the dissemination of divine truth at home and abroad.

Mr. Pollok, sympathizing as he did with his whole heart in the views of the Association, delivered at one of their meetings, an address, which, to say the least, is remarkable for a fine tone of religious feeling, as well as fervid eloquence. We shall here furnish the reader with one brief extract. The speaker thus proceeds:—"I know that you and the other members of this society have no greater joy than to hear that by the blessing of God on the exertions of British christians, thousands have been liberated from the imbruting fetters of ignorance and superstition—lifted up from vile prostration to deaf and dumb idols, and taught the honourable worship of the living God. You need not to be informed, nor I trust any member in your society, how rapid of late has been the flight, and how wide the conquests, of that Angel which flies in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; and how widely he is proclaiming with a loud voice,—'Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water.' To what I have said I know you are prepared to give full credit. And to the uninformed and unbelieving, let existing facts bear witness. Let them listen through the medium of the most authentic communications, some of which have been sealed with blood, to praises of Messiah, which are now heard here and there, from the rising to the setting of the sun. Let them behold, and it is a pleasing sight, the shivering Greenlander, whose mind for many past ages, like his wintry seas, has been frozen and benumbed by the cold breath of ignorance, and shrouded in darkness, now illuminated, melted, invigorated, and purified by the all enlivening beams of 'the sun of righteousness.' Let them behold many a thirsty African, in the midst of his burning deserts, drinking of the immortal waters of the river of life, and eating of the fruit of that tree 'whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.' Let them turn their minds to the Indus and Ganges, and hear the howlings of the beasts of prey, and the battle-shouts of warring savages, broken here and there by the sweet warblings of Immanuel's praise. Let them see the simple Hindoos casting their deaf and dumb idols to the moles and to the bats, and flying like doves to the windows of salvation. Let them hear with gratitude and delight the hallelujahs of Euxine's shores respond to the hosannas of the Caspian; while the immortal standard of the cross waves the ensigns of peace on Caucusus' lofty brow. Let them behold the Persian, instead of travelling to Mecca, opening up to the Creator and Redeemer the incense of a broken spirit and of a pure heart. Nor have America's isles of slavery been altogether barren of the fruits of righteousness. Although there, hand has joined in hand to darken the glooms of ignorance, strengthen the shackles of slavery, and widen the waste places of death, yet, even there, may be seen immortal souls eluding the grasp of oppression; escaping the thick clouds of meditated ignorance; and, in the chariot of salvation, triumphing away to the city of eternal refuge. No one needs to be told, that, only a few years ago, throughout all these nations and people, not one beam of celestial day broke into the horrid gloom of their spiritual night; not one of their songs of praise saluted the ear of Zion's King. By the blessing of God on the exertions of Bible and Missionary Societies, the wilderness and the solitary place are glad; the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. * * * But were I to say that the present contemplation of the victorious march of truth in the lands of ignorance, was all the reward which awaits the christian's exertions, I would be speaking apart from the words of inspiration. When this world with all its enjoyments, has passed

away—when gold cannot purchase one luxurious dish to the voluptuary, nor a moment's repose to the careless, nor one grim smile to the earth-grasping miser, then shall the exertions of the christian receive their full reward. When that christian who has been the means of spiritually enlightening the mind of a fellow creature, has put on immortality—when he is reposing himself on the ever-verdant banks of the river of life, then from him shall be heard a louder note of praise swelling the eternal hosannas of heaven. How much will it add to his endless bliss, to shake hands in the regions of immortality, with some once inhabitant of the desert, whom he has been permitted by his benefactions to be the means of elevating from the wastes of darkness, suffering, and death, and of placing amid the brightness of immortal day, and the felicities of eternal life."

The following are the contents of a Letter dated July, 1821. It refers to the approaching death of an uncle, and is addressed to his brother:—"I am just arrived at Moorhouse. I left our uncle David about three hours ago, and received what I fear shall be the last injunction which I shall ever receive from him. Yesterday he was unable to sit out of bed, and this day he is still weaker. He is wearing away with resigned dignity. Although his faith, as I heard him say, is perhaps not that of full assurance, yet with humble resignation and hopeful confidence he can say, that though his God slay him he will trust in him, that he shall be more than a conqueror through him that loved him. How solemn, how affectionate were his admonitions to me! and you know with what feelings I left him. Never did Young's interrogative assertion strike so deeply into my mind.

"What is time worth? Ask death-beds—they can tell. I cannot detail, for I am wearied to-night. I have written a few things, which you will see when you come to Moorhouse."

The usual carriculum of study for young men, before entering the Divinity Hall in Scotland, is four years; but as Mr. Pollok's education had been begun somewhat late in life, he protracted his philosophical studies a year longer. It might be also that the attractions of a College life formed one strong inducement why Mr. Pollok continued longer than the usual period at his philosophical studies. Certainly to ingenious youth no employment can afford higher delight than the exercises of a College. Besides Lectures comprising lucid and compendious views of the various branches of science, the easiest method of acquiring knowledge, the student has access to an extensive Library, designated in ancient times, by an ancient Prince, as the office of the medicines of the soul, a privilege he can scarcely prize too highly; add to all this daily conversation with his fellows prosecuting the same studies, whose enthusiasm he imbibes, and whose suggestions he turns to account, and we may find reasons enough why a man of genius should have lingered so long among the bowers of the Academy. Learning and religion have been closely connected in Scotland from the institution of the Presbyterian Church in that country; and some are of opinion that this connexion is such a necessary one that it forms her chief glory, and must continue till the end of time. It may be admitted, however, without any disparagement to learning, that a still higher degree of advancement is in reserve for the Church, when the blessing of Heaven is given in a larger degree, and the pastoral office shall cease because of the superior enlightenment of the people, and it shall not be needed to preach the knowledge of the Lord or the Gospel of salvation, for all shall know it from the least to the greatest. An era of this kind seems to be hinted at in the Bible; and in the present advanced state of the human mind it is not

without reason that pious christians of some denominations have thought that a deficiency in learning would be no defect, if supplemented by a greater measure of charity. The education Mr. Pollok received was admirably fitted for preparing him to excel in the walks of literature; it was perhaps less so for preparing him to minister to a christian congregation. Passing over, however, farther reflections of this kind, we proceed with our narrative. In November, 1821, Mr. Pollok was enrolled, for his fifth session, a student of philosophy in Glasgow College. He studied the higher branches of the Mathematics under Professor Miller, and Natural Philosophy under Professor Meikleham. During this session he carried off no prize. It appears, however, that he had bestowed great attention upon the business of both classes. His brother informs us that, for the former class, he wrote eleven Essays, averaging more than four quarto pages each, besides taking copious notes from the lectures of the Professor; while for the latter, though he wrote no Essays, there still remain eight thin octavo volumes of notes under the various heads of Geography, Algebra, Logarithms, Trigonometry, and Conic Sections. A stranger would form a very erroneous opinion of the means of improvement enjoyed by Scottish students if he confined his attention to the classes which they were required to attend. The truth is, as we already stated, the Colleges of Scotland, although they are far from being perfect, are yet conducted on fair and liberal principles. We ascribe this, however, rather to the Presbyterian *regime* of the country than to the heads of Colleges. That we may not be supposed to speak indiscriminately, we may just mention, (1.) That the distinction between Dissenter and Churchman is not known among the students. So it was, at least, in our times. Both stand upon precisely the same level; and the privileges of the Seminaries, whatever these may be, are awarded on the single ground of merit and proficiency, the students themselves being the Judges. (2.) The students are allowed to form societies for their mutual improvement, and the Professors exercise no inquisitorial scrutiny whatever in respect to their proceedings. Their only security, that the students, in conducting such societies, will act with propriety and decorum, rests in the sound principles which they receive in the College, or in their several Churches. Accordingly, in all the Colleges in Scotland, the great majority of the students are members of private societies, formed for the express purpose of improving themselves in Philology, Rhetoric, or in some department of science; and without adverting to the friendships which are there formed, the improvement received, by comparing their views one with another on the topics discussed by the Professor, or in listening to original and often elaborate Essays delivered by one of themselves, we do not hesitate to say, is little inferior to what they gain in the public classes. During this session Mr. Pollok was a member of a society of the nature referred to, and we find among his papers a very eloquent Essay delivered by him at one of its meetings. The object of the Essayist is to show the folly of supposing, that because our lot is cast in a remote period of the world's history, the fields of literature have been so trodden, and the mines of knowledge so ransacked, that we cannot expect to find a gem or flower either in the one or in the other, and that nothing remains for us than just to fold our hands in sloth and inactivity, and to lament over our unhappy fate in having come too late into the world. Mr. Pollok combats this idea throughout with much force of argument, and great felicity of style and illustration. Some passages follow:—"The youth who finds his lot has destined his temporal existence to the nineteenth century, and granted him at the same time a patient and vigorous philosophical spirit, will soon discover that he has nothing to fear from the lateness of his arrival, or the labours and renown of his ancestors.

He may yet benefit society, and encircle his temples with unfading laurels. If he is captivated with the philosophy of mind, the object of his desire remains still in comparative darkness. Aristotle said much about the soul, but he said little that was intelligible. Many centuries were quibbled away in endeavouring to explain what had perhaps never any meaning. Heaven, in mercy to mankind, sent Bacon, and since his time the powers and operations of the human mind have been considerably unveiled. * * * * *
If there be yet a plentiful harvest inviting the philosopher, the historian, and the moralist, and promising them a rich reward, are there not also subjects of song and immortal wreaths tempting the poet to take hold of the harp, and fling his tender hand across the strings of harmony? The early poets, it is said, have taken possession of the most striking objects of nature, and their works are therefore more vigorous and sublime than those of later bards. Whether this long-received opinion may not be rather imaginary than real, there is room for doubt. Poets were posting themselves in the strong places of nature during thousands of years anterior to Milton; and yet without copying the images or thoughts of his predecessors, he confounds us with a vastness and sublimity of idea and comparison, before which almost every former poet must veil his head as the stars at the approach of the sun. Homer's heroes fling from their hands stones which two men in the late ages of degeneracy could not lift. Milton's heroes take the mountain by its piny tops and toss it against the enemy. At the name of Shakspeare the bards of other years fall down in deep prostration, and abjure the name of poet. In strength of expression these two archangels in poetry stand aloft like the star neighbouring Teneriffe among the little islands that float on the Atlantic surge. If the verse of Milton be less melodious than that of Homer and Virgil, it is because the language in which he wrote was unsusceptible of equal harmony. In like manner, were we to compare the lyric poets of modern Europe with those she produced in ancient days, the comparison would not be so unfavourable to our own times as has been often imagined. But were we to confine the comparison to the poets of our nation; were we to compare the early English poets with those of our own time, it has been often said we would lose by the comparison. The early poet lays hold of the most magnificent objects of his own country, and leaves to those who come after him, in the same nation, the more feeble images of beauty and elegance." The Author then goes on to allege that the early English poets are chargeable in many places with irregularity, extravagance, and nonsense, of which he seems to say that the poets of our own times are more free. He proceeds:—
"Quitting this unholy comparing of poets who have done all according to the gift received, it will be sufficient to know that they have left behind them subjects of noblest song, and laurels of immortal verdure, to crown him who may be so happy as to gain the favour of the coy sisters. And I think the very nature of poetry excludes the possibility of its subjects ever being exhausted. To please, to excite interest in existence, is the aim of poetry in general. By his success in this we ascertain the poet's merit, or the life of life which is in him. If he warm the affections, delight the imagination, and awe the understanding; and if the general tendency of his work be moral, it matters not whence he choose his subject, or by what means he attain his purpose. Other writers are confined by the boundaries of truth, but the poet has the boundless regions of fancy before him. Nearly three thousand years ago, Homer reached forth his careless hand and pulled from the party-coloured fields many a fair flower. Since his time many have made excursions into the wild territories of imagination, and brought forth with them abundant spoils. But her fields

are rich as ever. The flowers which bloom there, though plucked to-night, will grow up ere to-morrow. Over the lawns of fancy, Flora, with the rose and lily in her hand, forever walks, while Zephyrus breathes soft life on her cheek, and drops the dews of vegetation from his southern locks." * * * "The siccaneous (barren ?) critic, or the meagre scribbler, may hang down his little head in despair, and murmur out that what can be done is done already. But he who has drunk of Castalia's font, and listened to the mighty voice of the Parnassian sisters; who casts his bold eye on creation, inexhaustible as its Maker, and catches inspiration while he gazes, will take the lyre in his hand, delight with new melody the ear of mortals, and write his name among the immortal in song." It is manifest, from various parts of the Essay we have now quoted, that the Author had formed the scheme of some poem which should hand down his name to posterity. His mind was big with the theme, and he throws out not indistinctly a hint at the close that it was himself who, at some day not far distant, was about to "write his name among the immortal in song." And yet it may be mentioned, in singular contrast with these anticipations, that he was almost wholly secluded from society; and who can doubt that this very circumstance enabled him to cherish that elevation of mind whereby he was enabled to look down upon the vanities and frivolities of the world, and to anticipate a period when time should be no more; when the distant future, with all the incidents in the lives of men and histories of nations, should be found to be things long passed away. Melancthon, on one occasion, is reported to have entertained a wish to retire into Palestine, like Jerome in the fifth century, and to seclude himself from the busy world, that he might write with greater power on things divine. But it would seem that one may be a hermit in the midst of a great city as easily as in the solitudes of Bethlehem; for, during the five sessions that Mr. Pollok was in Glasgow, he seems to have been so much a recluse student, that he did not even make himself acquainted with the Secession Minister whose Church he had attended during all that time. It may be farther mentioned, that in the course of this session, which closed Mr. Pollok's Philosophical studies at the College of Glasgow, he received the degree of Master of Arts. And here, in conformity with Horace's maxim of mixing up jests with graver matters, we may be permitted to introduce a brief anecdote illustrative of the peculiar sensibility of the poet. But hold! we are not sure that we shall be able to lay our finger on it again. Yes—we cannot find it, indeed, though we have turned over the large volume containing his life from beginning to end. We read it on the first perusal, and therefore we give it from memory. It so happened that Mr. Pollok had a dog to which he was greatly attached, as much so as ever Lord Byron was to his Newfoundland cur, or Cowper to his two hares. Well, the sonsie animal had gone into Glasgow, very probably, along with the driver of the churn-milk-cart, and, sporting with some of its compeers of the canine race, being a stranger in the city, it lost its way, and never returned. The cart returned home with the driver, but no dog attended it. Darkness came on, and Robert, giving up all hope of seeing him again, showed strong symptoms of uneasiness. Some of his friends, who took the matter more lightly, asked the reason why he was so much disturbed, when the affectionate poet made answer, "*that he knew the dog would be very ill about him, and that was the reason why he was so ill about the dog!*" According to our estimate of matters, this was the language of nature.

"We've loved him the more that we heard
Such tenderness flow from his tongue."

PART SECOND.

We have just seen that Mr. Pollok had finished his five years' course at College, and he appears now to have had some misgivings as to his future prospects. Accordingly, when he had arrived at his father's house, we find him writing to this effect to his brother:—"My mind, like every body's mind, is occupied about the past, the present, and the future. Yesterday, the first of summer (May 1, 1822) was as fully fraught with heavenly benevolence as any day ever shone on me. I was free, as you know, from all studential fetters, and in the best of company, the free, cheerful, liberalized, and pious. I tried to enjoy what God had given me to enjoy. I looked on the countenances of my friends, caught the warm comings-forth of their hearts, and heard their words swollen with a fullness of wish for my welfare. Nor did their wishes leave their doings behind. I beheld the kind features of the sky, and cast my eyes on the variegated verdure and flowery dress of the mountain, the meadow, and the lawn. I listened to the grateful song of a thousand laverocks stationed in the middle heavens, or turned my ear to the varied raptures of the grove; and would fain have said, with the poet,—

"My heart rejoiced in nature's joy."

And there was indeed an occasional moment when darkness fled from my soul, and allowed it to place itself in the attitude of enjoyment and gratitude—the homage most reasonable and most acceptable from man to his Maker. But soon did gloominess muster back its wicked banditti, and vex my soul with its wonted engines. What is bread if it be locked up? What is the beauty of colour to the blind? What is the chorus of Heaven to the deaf? murmured I; *or what is the glorious bounty of the morning day of summer to the penniless scholar*, fitted to know and correct the world, or weep or laugh at it; but alas! sadly unfitted to live in it?"

At the time of which we are now writing, men were perhaps more under the influence of imagination than they are at present. That most distinguished of all preachers in modern times, Dr. Chalmers, was then in the blaze of his popularity. His sermons, it is well known, were characterized by great reach of thought and fervour of eloquence. It would not be easy to exaggerate the effect which this great Genius produced on the public mind. He was a man of a thoroughly scientific turn; active, exercised, and sagacious, he possessed besides the highest powers of imagination, that threw a splendour over all his compositions which, as far as I remember, was not equalled by any writer or speaker either in ancient or modern times. The effect of the weekly ministrations of such a man in the west of Scotland, at this time, was very great; he really left the impress of his mind upon all his cotemporaries; and such was the grandeur of those views and illustrations which he gave of divine truth, that men really seemed, for the time, to swim in a sea of glory. They felt as if they had been carried up into the heavenly sanctuary, and inhaled its breath, as well as beheld its beauty and its splendour. He gave an entirely new turn to the spirit of the age. In his discourses the greatness of religion was vindicated in the eyes of men; there was no force of argument which was not

employed to demonstrate its importance; there was no region in nature or in science which was not laid under contributions to illustrate or subserve its triumphs. It is to be observed, also, that there was a class of poets at this time who wielded a great influence over the public mind; men who seemed to cast behind them all the rules of Horace and other critics, and after the manner of the ancient prophets wrapt up in their mantles, courted inspiration amid the fastnesses of the mountains, or by the margin of lakes and streams; and who, after they had plenished their souls by solitary communings with nature in her loveliest or most stupendous displays, poured forth their enraptured song in the ears of admiring myriads. At this time, when Scott and Byron and Southey, and a crowd of poets and minstrels, were in the noon of their days, the public mind seemed to glow with the lustre of their glory; railways and utilitarian philosophers, which make such sad inroads on the domains of poetry, had scarcely as yet begun to be named. It was altogether a season of poetic enthusiasm, and in the imaginations of many the millenial glory had begun to dawn upon the earth. We need not wonder that the genial mind of Pollok imbibed largely the spirit of the times. We see tokens of it in all his writings; whether we look to his philosophical essays or to his familiar epistles, we find in each and all of them the buoyant and imaginative spirit of the times breaking forth. We have sometimes thought it less seemly in these productions, because it is felt even by himself to be out of place, hence a want of ease and stiffness in the midst of the splendid declamation—but in his poetry it lives and shines in joy and in beauty

Let us here give a specimen of his poetry, which he has copied in the midst of a long letter to his friend Mr. Marr, dated May, 1822. Mr. Pollok had gone on a romantic excursion to the town of Paisley. Musing as he went along, he appears to have spent much time on the road; for before he reached the town it was ten o'clock of the night. He tells us that there he was introduced to a young lady. She is thus described: "Her eyes dispensed an everlasting sorcery, that he who once had looked would look for ever. Her hair in witching ringlets, hovered round her snowy forehead. Her ruby lips would have tempted the iron-hearted miser from his gold, and made his soul most liberal. Her form was symmetry itself and life; and over her wholly the powers of softness, health, love, and youth, for ever wished to wander. Beware, O friend, of any naughty conclusion. And ye severe in virtue, be not too hasty. Modesty sat on her brow, and checked every unrighteous marauder of my breast." Upon parting with this excellent person, Mr. Pollok's reason appears to have been absolutely bewildered by an unbridled imagination, for he resolved that he would not go to bed that night, for "the night," he says, "was lovely, and I soon determined to spend it in the open air." * * * * "I hasted away from the town by a road which led to a romantic wood, about three miles off. It was now fit time for musing; my soul gathered itself together; and sometimes walking, sometimes standing, and sometimes leaning on a dyke or a tree, I communed thus."—His communing assumed the form of blank verse, and we shall here give some specimens:—

"My soul attend! 'tis now fit time to hold
High converse with thyself. The gay attire
Of nature, which so oft wins on the mind
And steals her from herself, is folded up;
The lark has dropped from heaven; and still the choirs
That poured the day song from each leafy grove.
The voice of man is hushed. * * * *

The song of the Cuckoo, which we never hear in these western parts, is thus alluded to :—

"What sound is this that breaks upon my ear ?
From yonder wood it comes—the Cuckoo's voice.
'Tis curious at this pensive midnight hour !
Sweet bird of spring, thou hast broke up my thoughts
But I will weave thee in my song, and make
Thy kind intrusion teach me to be wise.
Who formed thee as thou art with wings to fly ?
Whence didst thou learn that ever-pleasing note ?
Who placed thee in the bosom of the spring,
And taught thee to attend her flowery path
Unerring ? Or why dost thou leave thy eggs
To be warmed into life, and fed, and guarded
By liltle birds thou canst not bargain with.*
Man taught thee not what man not understands.
Thou didst not teach thyself, else thou art wiser
Far than I. Some being, then, I see not,
Thee made and taught : the same most sure that stretched
Forth, curtain-like, yon Heavens, and in them placed
Those fiery hosts, the glory of the night.
Sweet bird ! I thank thee for thy midnight song ;
Farewell ! and as thou fliest o'er, announcing
Spring and joy to man, this informs him too
There is a God who made thyself and man."

The Author proceeds to reason about himself—where should he go, after death, to annihilation or to life ? He infers that it shall be to the latter state, from the excellency of the powers of the soul :—

"That God is good, I gather from the joy
O'er nature spread. I walk the summer morn :
Ten thousand little insects sportive dance
The sunny beam : sublime in air, the lark,
Full of devotion, lifts the cheerful song,
Joining sweet chorus with the tuneful groves.
Before me frisks the lamb ; the flocks and herds,
High fed and happy, spread o'er hill and plain.
A smile plays on the rippling rivulet ;
The trees seem joyful in their bushy robes ;
Fair peace sits on the gentle lily's brow ;
And love looks blushing from the rose's cheek.
In autumn, too, I walk the golden fields !
But who can tell the goodness then that waves
To man, to beast, to every living thing ?
Yes, God is good to man : this very hour
How many millions rest, and rest in peace !
Each morn how many millions wake to joy !
Why should I quote His reason, endless source
Of entertainment sweet ? or why send out

* The Cuckoo is said to be one of those birds which builds no nest of its own, but leaves its eggs to be hatched in the nest of some other bird.

His fancy, roving infinite, to waft
The rarest joys of all creation home?
Why turn his ears to music's heavenly tones?
Why ope his nostrils to the morning breeze?
Or place before his eye the birthful spring;
The autumn swelling, swelling every heart with joy;
The mountain forest, tossing to the storm;
The cliffy peak, lost in the skies; the moon,
Riding august the starry vault of night;
And ocean's face, all plenishing his soul
With thoughts how sweet, how worthy, how sublime!"

The following gem, which occurs in the verses from which we have copied the above, we subjoin. The poet is describing a Lover's bower:—

"The gentle birch put forth her tender arms,
And with the sacred hawthorn, tree of love,
Weave amorous o'er their heads a canopy;
The violet and daisy, bathed in dew,
In dew of May, flock round them, purest flowers!
Hard by their feet I heard a streamlet walk:
The hallowed zephyrs bring them incense sweet."

We have already noticed how much the times in which Mr. Pollok sang were under the influence of men of genius. There was another peculiarity in them,—a high philanthropic spirit took possession of all people. It did not matter what kind of views men took of religion,—whether these were more strict or more lax—all were imbued with an ardent spirit to benefit their fellow-creatures at home or abroad. Some, professing a greater share of prudence than of enthusiasm, said, that it was better to direct attention to home improvements in the first instance; but others, full of zeal and of aspiring faith, said that it was better to go forth with the good news of salvation to the most distant regions of the globe, leaving a covenanted God in Heaven to pour blessings upon their native land. Some looked to the sick, and the maimed, and the blind, and the deaf, and the widows and orphans in their affliction. Some thought of the seamen and the soldiers; and some thought again of the rising youth, and longed that they should be all taught according to the most approved system in secular and sacred learning. And last, but not least, many longed and laboured to obtain for Africa the blessings of religion and liberty. Societies started into existence as if by the touch of the Magician's wand, and these again were strengthened by numerous agencies, which embraced the length and breadth of the British isles; then again there were the quarterly meetings, and the yearly meetings, attended by all classes, from the peasant to the peer, from the humble cottager clad in russet, to the *demoiselle de qualite*, resplendant with youth and beauty. Popular assemblies are said to be favourable to eloquence, and never was the observation better illustrated than in the Bible, Missionary, and other meetings which were held at this time. Men who were dull and somniferous in the pulpit, awakened as if from their torpor, the moment they stood upon the platform, and saw around them the large and brilliant assemblies. We have heard the late Dr. McCrie, whose addresses from the pulpit were cold and formal, rise into something like inspired eloquence while speaking before a religious society; and if the influence of such meetings could rouse into life the most phlegmatic, what effect must they not have

had upon men of more sanguine temperaments. The truth is, when we reflect upon the excitement of those times, in respect of religious and philanthropic zeal, the only explanation we can give of its origin is, that it was a work of Heaven. God had a work to perform in calling individuals to labour in his cause at home and abroad, and great was the company, and eloquent the lips of those who sounded abroad his merciful proclamation. Mr. Pollok, we have seen from what has been said above, took a deep interest in the religious movement. The following is a passage taken from an address delivered before a Bible Society; the topic he touches up is the injustice done to Africa, her atrocious and unmitigated wrongs, which however, he seems to think, will be best remedied by the diffusion of Bible knowledge:—"No one, I imagine, is ignorant of the present great extent of the slave-trade; and no one, surely, is acquainted with the wretchedness attendant on slavery. Parliaments have assembled, kings and nobles have consulted, votes have been given, and our ears have been soothed with the rapturous sound—an Abolition of the slave-trade! But this sound has never yet wandered to the pillaged shores of Africa: the Niger and the Senegal have never murmured to its dulcet cadence; the heart of the fettered West Indian has never leaped at its approach. At this very moment many of the sons of Europe are prowling on the shores of Africa. And though all Europe has lifted up its voice against slavery, yet it either winks at those who carry it on, or is at most slack in the punishment of them. Thus while we are pleased to hear slavery talked of as a thing that was, it is still walking on the earth in all its terrible, devouring, infernal deformity and rage. Is there any one hearing me whose sympathies wish to keep company with a parent in distress? Let such a one look to the Mother on Africa's coast. How does her heart tremble within her when a European sail rises on her view! How does she faint away at the voice of a stranger! She sees the hell-faced slave-dealer, more horrible than the lion or crocodile, making towards her abode. Her sons and her daughters cluster round about her, and call her mother; but her arm is weak; the agony of her countenance is unnoticed; the voice of her prayer is unheard. The hell-commissioned slave-dealer, relentless as Abaddon himself, tears her children from her bosom, casts them into chains, and drives them away. And how, think ye, will she cast a last mother's look on their dear faces! With what feelings, think ye, will her eye follow their departure! And when she stands on the dreary shore, gazing on the sail that is dragging her children to a land of suffering and murder—gazing on it till its last quiver escapes from her eye, Oh, who can tell her agonies! how will all their fond endearments rush upon her mind! how will their everlasting loss break in upon her soul! Ye that are parents, will ye sleep over this? I have kept your attention away from the feelings of the children: look and see! From their eyes gush the streams of bitterest sorrow; from their lips is heard the loudest wail of injured nature! In the same ship, with bars of iron, may often be found the father, torn from his wife and children, the sister from the brother, the friend from the bosom of the friend, the lover from the arms of his mistress, for whom alone he wishes to live. In short, to load one vessel with slaves, all the strongest, tenderest chords of nature are burst asunder. And when these unhappy mortals are dragged forth to the prison islands, what is their lot? I will not enter upon it; my heart weeps for humanity; my soul runs back and trembles within me: the shoulder galled with the everlasting burden, the sweat-furrowed cheek, the sun-vexed worn-out look, gather up before my eye, the clanking of chains comes on my ears; the never-ceasing lash mingles its deep cutting sound; the last groan of a brother

lingers horribly on the wind; and the accursed look of the task-master; oh! who can bear it?"

Mr. Pollok entered the Divinity Hall of his own Church in Glasgow in the beginning of August, 1822. Though known among his own friends as a young man of high talents and genius, it does not appear that his fame had penetrated within the recesses of the Hall. This will appear from the following singular manifestation which attended the delivery of his first Discourse. One would have almost supposed, so singular is the case, that the demon of envy, who often assailed the poet, had here made his last assault, to prevent him coming into notice. And as the anecdote may serve to tender a word of encouragement to youthful talent when struggling with the adverse influences of rivals, we may be excused for transcribing it in a somewhat abreviated form in this place. "The discourse, according to prescribed custom, was a homily, and the text was these words in Romans, v. 19, 'By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.' While he read the text, and delivered the introduction and the first two heads, few of the students seemed to pay any attention to him. But when he came to the second paragraph in the third and last head, which was to show the effects of Adam's first disobedience on the rest of mankind, his language began to rise a little above the common level of prose; and at the first poetical expression, several of the students of the fourth and fifth sessions exchanged looks with one another, and smiled contemptuously. As he proceeded in the delivery, he mentioned, in illustration, the names of various animals, and of several inanimate agents and objects of nature. On the mention of these names the whole of the students fixed their eyes on him, and, with the exception of those of the first session, and a few others who were his personal friends or intimate acquaintances, broke out from disdainful smiles into audible laughter, so that at times he could scarcely be heard. But he went on, cool and collected, with his usual self-possession, keeping close to his notes, amid repeated bursts of laughter during the delivery of five full pages, or about the fifth part of his discourse. Here, as he was going on with characteristic self-command, showing negatively the 'effects of Adam's disobedience,' or enumerating a series of things which 'had Adam not disobeyed—had sin not entered into our world,' would not have taken place, having come to some things which might be applied to the present manifestation of the students, he stood boldly and determinedly forward to make himself be heard, and pronounced, with awful firmness in the course of delivery, these words; raising his chest over the pulpit, clenching his fist, fetching a stroke with his arm, and casting down on the students a look of great indignation, as he pronounced them:—'*Had sin not entered our world, no idiot smile would have gathered on the face of folly to put out of countenance the man of worth!*'" These words, with the tone and manner in which they were spoken, were enough: the laughter was silenced, and the students, as if ashamed of themselves, beat down their heads on the benches. The speaker, however, though still much excited, as he well might be, seemed to enjoy his triumph. He looked down on the offenders with much *sang froid*, as if he would have said, what do you think now of your ill-timed levity; laugh now if you dare or can. The rest of the discourse was listened to with attention: but when the Professor, as was the custom, proceeded to ask the opinions of the students on the discourse, they seemed to have rallied and resumed courage for a fresh assault. One, with great extravagance of manner, denounced the discourse, saying, among other things, that there never was such a piece of absurd bombast and nonsense delivered to any audience. The others followed in the wake of their

leader; and our poet was meditating a speedy conclusion to his studies at the Hall, had it not been that the Professor, Dr. Dick, a gentleman of great talent and dignity of character, exposed the rashness and flippancy of the critics, and approved of the discourse; recommending him, however, in his theological discourses, to be more on his guard in calling in the aids of imagination.

In October of the year above mentioned we find Mr. Pollok again residing at Moorhouse; and here, among other studies, he appears to have devoted some attention to a course of reading in poetry. He appears to have commenced with Chaucer, who wrote in the fourteenth century, and to have read in chronological order from his days downwards. Mr. Pollok appears to have carried on these attractive studies not merely for the sake of gratifying his own taste, but with the view of fitting himself for taking his own place among the choir in due time. The poetry which he most admired, among the whole series, was that of Milton. On one occasion, his brother informs us, that Robert came into his bed-room, and imagining him to be asleep, walked slowly about with Paradise Lost in his hands, saying, in a voice so as distinctly to be heard by him, striking the book at the same time on his thigh,—"*No, no, there's none of them like Milton—none like Milton!*" Indeed so much was Mr. Pollok's mind under the influence of these studies, in which at this time he was engaged, that not only did he meditate on them during the day, but he dreamed about them by night. We accordingly find our Author describing a dream which he had at this time. He forgot that the times of Cromwell and of the restoration of the "Merry Monarch" were gone by; and he fancied that his favourite Author was still alive. "I had a conversation," he says, "with Milton in a dream. We talked of his works. He seemed quite conscious of his own greatness, and quite sensible of their superiority. He spoke of them, and expressed his opinion of them freely and dignifiedly, and showed no false modesty, or, to use an emphatic expression of your own, he displayed no ostentatious humility. At length I said to him, What do you think of Comus? 'Comus!' he exclaimed, apparently forgetting that he had written it, 'What Comus?' 'The Mask,' I replied, 'is it not a well done work?' 'Yes,' he said, recollecting it, 'it is a finished piece.' Here I was so much affected with his presence, and so much impressed with the coincidence of his opinion with my own, that I awoke. So you see," he added, "I have Milton's own authority for saying of his Comus 'It is a finished piece.'" At this time, also, we find Mr. Pollok so deeply interested in the lives of his tuneful brethren, that he drew up a list of the sufferings and misfortunes which, in the days of their pilgrimage, they had endured. We shall not here copy it, as the fact is admitted that poets, speaking of them generally, in choosing their profession, did not choose one which contributed to their worldly advantage; and, doubtless, because it is a profession for which there is no strong demand among mankind until it is created. Men are too busy in pursuit of gain and other material things, not to speak of ambition, to give great heed in the first instance to the beautiful song of the poet. Accordingly, the poets being men of superior sensibility; men who have seen the beauties and greatness of this material system around us with a more delicate eye than their fellows; men who have examined into the history of past generations, and into the incidents of their own times, and have culled many a flower which else had "blush'd unseen," it is not to be wondered at that such men should be too often exposed to the neglect of the world. In a certain sense they have been like lambs in the midst of wolves; and, therefore, in order that they should be more comfortable, one of two things must have happened—the wolf must become like the lamb, the world of business and of common life must become like the fair

world of fancy and of poetry—or the poets must have some Macaenas, some patron of learning or of genius, who esteems it an honour to minister to them out of his abundance. And here it may be mentioned, as an illustration that the Millenium of the poets has not yet commenced, that Mr. Pollok himself must be ranked like that youthful writer to whom we have above alluded among the number of the martyred students. It is true that many gentlemen, when he came to be known, extended towards him a patronizing hand; but alas! the relief came too late.

> "'Twas thine own genius gave the final blow,
> And helped to plant the wound that laid thee low.
> So the struck eagle stretched upon the plain,
> No more through rolling clouds to soar again—
> View'd his own feathers on the fatal dart,
> And wing'd the shaft that quiver'd in his heart.
> Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel,
> He nurs'd the pinion which impelled the steel;
> While the same plumage that had warmed his nest
> Drank the last life blood of his bleeding breast."

Though Mr. Pollok had not given the most successful illustration of preaching in the Divinity Hall himself, as we have already noticed, he seems, however, firmly to have believed that there were more defaulters than he was in this matter. Accordingly we find him delivering, before a small society of his fellow-students, an Essay on Preaching. As far as we can perceive into the nature of the objections of Mr. Pollok, he seems to think that it would be better were preachers to present a larger picture of the works of God before the minds of the people; instead of general language he would give full and copious illustrations. Every one knows, however, that it is much easier to find fault with any department of work than to do it; and perhaps there is too much of this among young men; but we cannot help thinking that one of the evils which attend the present religious regime of the Church is, that there is a leaven of vain glory about her, which, considering her many imperfections, it might be good policy to curtail, as the tendency thereof is either to provoke the attacks of clear-sighted adversaries, or the disappointment of friends. Let us hear, however, Mr. Pollok's objections to certain of our modern preachers. We must admit that he does not speak in a spirit of bitterness:—"I believe, as much as any man does, that the truths of the Gospel need no setting-off ornaments; but I differ from the preachers in question about the meaning of the term ornament. They denominate everything ornament, or at least attempted ornament, in speech, that sets off an idea, except in the barest way; I call nothing ornament that gives force to the idea, or leaves it more deeply impressed on the mind. * * * Our barren, dry preachers, zealous for the dignity of the pulpit, are afraid to single out any object in nature. Our Saviour knew well the dignity of the pulpit, but he knew also that the objects of nature were pure and would not defile it. Hear him in his heavenly eloquence saying to his Disciples, 'Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them.'" Mr. Pollok, in another place, proceeds to say, that while he would have the preacher to preach the Gospel in plain and simple language, he would have him "bring into the service of the Gospel all the objects and ministers of nature. We would have him to give a tongue to the sun, and the moon, and every star of Heaven, to speak forth our Saviour's praise. We

would have him to bring forth the beasts of the forest, and cast them down to do homage at the foot of Christ." Notwithstanding all this, Mr. Pollok confesses that he felt a difficulty in making himself clearly understood. "After all I have said to characterize the mode of preaching in question, I know you can have a very inadequate idea of what I mean by it." Had Mr. Pollok lived longer to practice sermon writing, he might possibly have found, with many others, that it was a far easier matter to act the part of the critic than to come up to his own standard. A saying of Dr. Davidson, of Edinburgh, who was a famous preacher in his day, is perhaps not inapplicable in this case. "I'm no fond," said the good divine, "I'm no fond of preaching before Ministers, because they judge mair sharply than ither folk. I'm less fond o' preaching before a preacher, because he's less mercifu' than the others. However, as he kens himsel' what it is to make a slip, I could preach before him tae, but steik the poopit door against me a'thegither rather than set me to preach to students o' Divinity!"

During this summer Mr. Pollok performed eight days' service as one of the yeomanry cavalry of Renfrewshire. As a student of Divinity, he was of course excepted from such service altogether, but he appears to have been willing to act as a substitute for one of his brothers on whom the duty had devolved. He therefore laid aside the quill for a season and grasped the sword, and mounting his charger, appeared among the ranks to be drilled according to the usual form. He is said to have made, for the time, a very excellent soldier, and to have been peculiarly expert in the sword exercise. It may seem strange to some, "in these piping times of peace," to hear of a *Literateur*, such as Mr. Pollok, volunteering to act as a soldier. And yet a very learned writer, George Buchanan, assures us, in a Latin note to one of his tragedies, that the connection between the study of literature and of the military art is very close.* That distinguished poet, also, was so full of the *esprit de corps*, that he became a volunteer in a military expedition (in castra est profectus) for the express purpuse of knowing the science of war. It appears Mr. Pollok was prepared to endure hardness, also, in his new profession; for when the gentleman who was billeted along with him in a house, made some complaint as to the nature of their fare, the poet replied, "we are treated just as soldiers should be treated, and we will get on quite happily." We may here insert, also, a stanza from the pen of Mr. Pollok. He had written a Homily at the request of the Presbytery of Glasgow, and the text was, 2 Cor. ix. 15, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." On the back of the manuscript he had written as follows:—

"But they who were ever the fondest to meet,
Too often have wept o'er the dream they believed;
And the heart that has slumbered in friendship's seat
Is happy indeed if 'twas never deceived."

In the summer of 1823 Mr. Pollok wrote a Tale in prose, entitled Helen of the Glen. The scene of it is laid in Scotland during the persecuting times of Charles the Second; and one object of the Author in contrasting the sad scenes which were then enacted, for the purpose of establishing a dominant religion to which the people were averse, is, to teach christians who live in more peaceful times, and who have it in their power to worship God according

* "Neque enim inter rei militaris et literarum studium ea est, quam plerique falso putant, discordia; sed summa potius concordia, et occulta quaedam naturae conspiratio." See Irving's Life, p. 8.

to their consciences, the lesson of gratitude, as well as the importance of prizing it as an inestimable privilege and blessing. We shall here present the reader with some extracts, offering at the same time a brief outline of the Tale. James Thomson, in consequence of adverse fortune, having been compelled to enlist in the army, had gone over with his Regiment to Holland. His wife, Agnes Craig, accompanied him. Thomson, who was a pious soldier, fell in battle; and after this Mrs. Thomson returned to Scotland with her two children, Helen and William. She took up her abode in Ayrshire. The following is Mr. Pollok's description of the little habitation in which she dwelt:—"Cleughhead was situated at the head of one of those solitary glens so common in the wilder districts of Scotland. The walls were built with rough granite; the roof thatched with the heath of the mountain, and the rushes of the brook; and the interior, where the peat burned on the hearth, and the smoke rose up unconfined by any chimney till it escaped by a little hole in the roof, was soon rendered by Mrs. Thomson's industry and native cleanliness, and by the ready assistance of an old farmer whose name was Paton, neat and comfortable. Past the door of this humble dwelling feebly murmured a mountain rill, as it rambled in frolicsome meanders down the slope, now kissing the blooming heath, now rippling among the green rushes, and again playing with the shadow of the grey willow." * * * In these days, while worshipping God in Scotland, the faithful had to put their lives in their hands to enjoy the privilege. The following description of the Sunday morning on which Mrs. Thomson went, with her little daughter, to the place of rendezvous, we shall here copy:—"In her hallowed imagination, the sun coming up the rosy east unclouded, threw a purer ray over the solitary moorlands; a clearer dew sparkled on the red heather bell; the matin hymn of the sky lark, the varied music of the desert fowl, the bleating of the flocks that answered from knoll to knoll, the minstrelsy of the brook, and the gentle sigh of the zephyr that played among the wild mountain flowers, all assumed a chaster holier cadence, and seemed to confess the presence of the blessed day. Here and there was seen, over the brown moor, like vessels scattered on the ocean, the solitary peasant, travelling towards the glen to meet the servant of God. Little Helen, with a profusion of fair ringlets already floating on her neck and shoulders, now plucked the wild thyme, now looked to the playful chases of the lambs, and anon listened to her mother while she admonished her to hear the Gospel with reverence and attention. Thus engaged, they arrived at the place agreed on for meeting with the faithful ambassador of Jesus. The man of God was already there, and his little congregation mostly gathered around him. The place chosen for this day's worship of the most High was hidden from the distant view by the sides of the glen, one of which, withdrawing five or six yards from the streamlet, left a small green plain in the shape of a crescent. Here rose a large grey stone, on which the Minister rested the holy Book. Before him, on the rising ground, trode by the sheep into paths rising one above another, resembling a flight of stairs, sat his rustic audience, thirsting for the bread of life. On a knoll, at a small distance, watched one of their friends, to give the alarm in case of the appearance of the persecuting soldiers." The sermon was scarce ended when the congregation were attacked by troopers of the bloody Claverhouse, and among other incidents we have it narrated that Mrs. Thomson lost her life. The old farmer, Paton, now became the guardian of William and Helen. The following poetical description refers to them:—"As they grew up William was employed in keeping his benefactor's cows, and Helen assisted in the dairy. During their leisure hours they rambled

together by the rushy brooks and sunny hills, gathering here the wild thyme and there the silk white down of the cannach ; and never did they return home without visiting their mother's grave, covered now by the pious care of the shepherds with a smooth granite stone, on which they had cut, in uncouth letters, the name of the inhabitant below. A grey willow, whose roots were nursed by the passing streamlet, spread its sweet smelling leaves half way over the grave ; and by the other side bloomed the heath, rustling on the edge of the shore, while the breeze sighed over the moorland." We shall here merely add, that William went to Glasgow to a friend of his father's, to serve in a counting-house. Here, in consequence of associating with bad companions, he sunk into a course of backsliding ; but was subsequently, by means of his sister Helen, brought to a better state of mind. Helen died at an early age, of consumption, and William became a prosperous merchant in the city of Glasgow, and did much good in his life time. It may be here mentioned, as an illustration of the facility Mr. Pollok had acquired in composition, that the Tale of Helen of the Glen was planned and written in the course of a week.

The two other prose tales of Mr. Pollok, namely, "Ralph Gemmel" and "The Persecuted Family," were written between the months of October, 1823, and February, 1824. The former is written with much vigour, and with a very laudable desire to impress the importanee of religious obligation upon the minds of young persons. The father of Ralph Gemmel is a rough country squire, a cavalier, and bitter persecutor of the covenanters. His lady, on the contrary, is remarkable for her unaffected piety and zeal for the pure faith. They have two children, Ralph and Edward. The former is the favourite of Mrs. Gemmel, as he always listened with deep attention to her religious counsels and admonitions, while the father is attached to Edward, because he acquiesced in his cruel policy, and attended him in his expeditions against the rebellious covenanters. The story turns chiefly upon the fortunes of Ralph, the elder of the brothers. His mother died at an early age, leaving strong injunctions upon her son to cleave to the cause of God. Some little time after the death of his mother, Ralph seemed to relapse into the ways of his father, but was subsequently restored by one of the ejected Ministers who knew him when a child with his mother. After this he became more decided, and attached himself to the suffering Church. He now endured great privations. He was condemned to death ; but being respited, he was sent to work as a slave in Jamaica. He continued in bondage in that island for nearly two years, when he was liberated by the Revolution in 1688. Returning to Scotland, he found his father in his old age had relented and become penitent, and upon his death he succeeded to the paternal estate, and spent the rest of his days in prosperity and peace. In this tale Mr. Pollok has indulged less in pieturesque description than in the former ; and as he excels in this species of writing, we have been more careful to present specimens to the reader. We shall merely copy the following, which, as far as we now remember of the scenery, is true to nature : "One Sabbath, after returning home as usual from the unprofitable discourses of the curate, Ralph went out at the evening tide to meditate. It was in the end of autumn. And as he walked along the banks of the Irvine towards the sea, the wild flower, with scarcely its withered stalk remaining, which he had seen in the early year painted with all the colours of beauty—the shrub, naked and blasted, which was lately vested in a thick foliage of healthy green—the aged leaf, which fell rustling from its fellows—the stream, which was ever running on to be lost in the ocean—and the light which faded dimly away on the indistinct summits of Arran, all had a tendency to draw him into serious

musing, and especially to remind him of the short duration and sure decay of all earthly things."

"The Persecuted Family" is a Tale which shows the malignant and cruel spirit of the Government, during the reign of Charles the Second, to the Presbyterians in Scotland, in a clear light. It contains the history of the sufferings of the family of James Bruce, one of the ejected Ministers. It brings before us the family of Mr. Bruce, consisting of his wife and two children, enjoying comfort and happiness, and what is of more importance, great usefulness in the midst of his parishioners in Ayrshire. It narrates his ejection, along with 350 other clergymen, from their livings, to take shelter among the peasantry; it brings before us the indefatigable zeal of Mr. Bruce to execute his high commission amid the greatest afflictions, until the worthy family, one after another, is cut off from the land. It is believed that the taste of the public for tales of this sort is considerably abated, and we cannot regret it, as the tendency of them, perhaps, is to destroy our confidence in the history of past times by the imagination that the whole is fictitious,—a conclusion which would not be of advantage either in a civil or religious point of view. The controversy which the covenanters waged is not yet settled; indeed it may be said to be raging nearly with as much fierceness as ever; and all that is awanting, on the part of a certain party, is merely the power, otherwise we might soon see the scenes so common in Scotland in the middle of the seventeenth century enacted over again in our own times. In these circumstances it is not, perhaps, wise, that the martyr's testimony should be mixed up with the works of fiction. Their testimony has a voice of its own; and such writings as those of Howie, Woodrow, and others, publish it through all generations; so that christian people, on both sides of the Atlantic, so clear has been the testimony concerning these things, might with great propriety apply to it the language of the prophet Jeremiah—from the moors of Clydesdale has a voice been heard, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning—Scotland weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are not! It may here, however, be observed, as explanatory of the peculiar favour with which the public received these productions at this time, that Sir Walter Scott, in one of his novels, had greatly misrepresented the character of the covenanters. He had caricatured them, not apparently through ignorance, but from the same motives which induced their enemies to shed their blood. He had put into the mouths of fictitious characters the very words of some of those noblemen who sat in judgment upon them, and, I had almost said, claimed credit to himself for profane wit and levity which belonged really to them. It was not wonderful, therefore, that the Presbyterian people of Scotland, who were conscious of having received so much benefit from the sufferings and labours of their covenanting fathers, should have been aroused by the attacks of such a fascinating writer as Sir Walter Scott unquestionably is: and accordingly aroused they were, and many pens were put in motion to cover the assailant with confusion. The most powerful writer in defence of the covenanters, was unquestionably Dr. McCrie. He wrote with perfect *con amore* on the whole subject, as he was profoundly versed in the history of those times; and such was the impression produced upon the public mind in Scotland by this gentleman's Expose of Sir Walter's misrepresentations, that the latter was so vexed that, we doubt not, he would have been glad for a season to have taken refuge in a cavern, like some of the ejected Ministers, to escape the storm that was raging without. It is to be observed, however, that the manner in which Dr. McCrie defended the witnessing Church of Scotland in the middle of the seventeenth

century, was by a fair appeal to historical documents; and unquestionably this was the most efficient mode,—every shaft drawn from this armoury told with tenfold force upon the assailants. But there was another class who wished to defeat them with their own weapons—these were such writers as Mr. Pollok. Inasmuch as Sir Walter and his friends had attacked the covenanters through the medium of fiction, so they deemed it perfectly fair to defend them in the same way; accordingly, at the time to which we now refer, the press teemed with tales illustrative of the peculiar characters of the faithful men who, for twenty-eight years, upheld the banner of the covenant in the midst of the cruel scenes of dangers and of deaths. It was for this crisis that Mr. Pollok's tales were fitted, and perhaps their best apology is to be found in the circumstances of the times. Having said so much of Mr. Pollok's Tales, which have been since collected and published in one volume, entitled "Tales of the Covenanters," we may merely add, that he received, for the copyright of Helen of the Glen, the sum of £15; and for the copyright of the other two, £21 sterling. Considering, however, the favour these tales afterwards obtained with the public, they should have brought their Author a larger remuneration.

It was while Mr. Pollok's mind was busied with his Tales that he appears to have had a desire to visit certain of the localities in the east of Scotland that are famous in the Martyrologies of past times. We find him accordingly perambulating the Pentland Hills, which lie to the south of Edinburgh—scenes peculiarly agreeable to the lovers of the picturesque. An incident occurred while Mr. Pollok with his friend Mr. Marr, with pious care, was enquiring for Rullion Green, the spot on which a battle was fought between the King's troops and the Covenanters in 1666, which throws some light on the feelings of the peasantry in these parts. They had called at a shepherd's house to ask if they were near the place—the good woman of the house informing them that it was close at hand, sent her little daughter to point it out; she knelt down beside the Martyrs' stone, tracing out the inscription. To the astonishment of the pious pilgrims, when they were about leaving the hallowed spot, the mother came out of her cottage, calling out, "Mary! Mary!" She had taken it into her head that they were "Doctors" about to make away with her daughter, and perhaps carry her into Edinburgh for dissection! What Mary thought is not known, but she soon made off from Rullion Green. The best part of the story is, that the Tourists on returning to the cottage, found that Mary's mother had become so ashamed of her fears, that she wished to hide them altogether. Mr. Pollok, however, and his friend, joked her into a frank confession; and to convince them they were not Doctors, bestowed a small gratuity upon their young guide, and left them all composed and pleased. Mr. Pollok appears to have been much pleased with his visit to the Pentland Hills—his feelings and fancy were alike gratified by the nobleness of the prospect, as well as by the vivid associations with past times which the locality had called forth. The following extract from a letter to his brother, dated 18th December, 1823, refers to his visit to Edinburgh. "On Tuesday we visited the Castle; the Tomb of Ferguson, erected by Burns; Parliament Square, in the court of which are lawyers innumerable; Holyrood House; Calton Hill, and so on. The Castle, 'veteran hoary in arms,' to which Burns likens it, and the view of town and country and sea from it, produced a most glorious feeling in our souls. No man could define it. But a feeling that can be exactly defined is not worth the defining. Holyrood House, as a mere building, is nowise very remarkable.—But when we thought how many of our Kings, our Stuarts, unfortunate things, had trod its royal courts; led the dance in its then merry halls, brilliant with

the lustre of fair eyes, whose light has long since set for ever, and whose laugh of love and kindness and mirthfulness, had passed ere we came thither, had cracked their crack, taken their glass, planned and prospered, or had been disappointed there; and especially when we considered that all these illustrious kings, and all these lovely dames, lay now mouldered into dust, we felt———— I don't know what we felt—you will feel it yourself." Mr. Pollok visited the College, and heard Professors Wilson and Ritchie lecture on Moral Philosophy and Logic. "Upon the whole," he says, "we have been highly delighted, and therefore highly pleased with our short and wintry excursion. Could every week of our life produce as many interesting ideas and feelings with as few painful and indifferent ones, we would smile as we looked away into futurity."

Upon leaving Edinburgh, Mr. Pollok returned to Moorhouse, from whence he afterwards proceeded to Glasgow. Here, it appears, in consequence of over-exertion, he was seized with a severe illness, which seems for a time to have alarmed his friends. He recovered, however, so far in the course of a fortnight, that he was able to write. The following letter, dated 20th March, 1824, bears a reference to this. It affords a pleasing testimony to the grateful feelings which Mr. Pollok cherished towards his friends for their attentions on this occasion. "I have had a severe sickness since I wrote to you last. I was taken suddenly ill. It was fever, accompanied and followed with a violent rheumatic affection. Ten days was I closely confined to bed, and suffered much from the violence of the disease—much also from the vomiting, blistering and sweating ordered by the surgeons: all of which, however, as they were applied by the best medical skill, had a good effect. I was so weak, that I could not stand without assistance, reduced almost to a skeleton; but was never in what you would call a very dangerous state, which was my reason for not ordering a leter to you.

"It is now eight days since I rose: and bless the Lord O my soul! and all that is within me be stirred to bless and to magnify his holy name. I am recovering my strength with wonderful rapidity. The fever has burned up the old constitution; and a new one is fast forming, I trust in many respects better. I am now able to walk out an hour and a half before dinner, and eat most excellently. Indeed my health is much better than it was before the attack. I am doing nothing yet but nursing myself.

"You owe heaven gratitude on my account. And surely it must be a pleasing sacrifice to the Creator and Preserver of men, to see a brother pouring fourth his soul in gratitude for a brother, so assisted and cared for as I have been by Almighty goodness.

"During my illness I was most piously attended. Margaret came, in the fulness of unwearied attention, ministering to my comfort. Miss Campbell came, fleeting like the light of heaven, glowing with infinite regard. My father! O how did his countenance comfort me! John, Mrs. Pollok, Miss Janet Pollok, Miss Jean, Robert, all circled me round. And even M., like the star of the morning, lovely, sweet, and glorious, drew near, and threw the gladness of innocence into my heart. My friends in Glasgow are equally attentive. Mr. Marr was the stay-wheel God Almighty placed at my right hand. Rejoice with me my brother, and 'bless the Lord O my soul.'"

After Mr. Pollok had recovered his usual state of health and strength, it appears, that in company with two other friends, he made a short tour to Girvan, Ballantrae, and Stranraer, places in the south of Scotland. Part of these regions is comprehended within what is called the "Land of Burns," and

which, in consequence of its being celebrated in the poet's song, draws towards it pilgrims from distant countries. Here the Doon, the Stinchar, and the Ayr, roll through beautiful vales, over whose shady streams the mavis and the blackbird warble forth their melodious and manly notes. Accordingly, we find, in a brief account of this tour preserved by one of Mr. Pollok's friends, of his own name, that they were much delighted with their visit to the first of these streams. They stood upon the bridge which spans its waters; and as they repeated that beautiful lyric, beginning with the words "Ye banks and braes o' bonny Doon," they doubtless remembered that the works of Nature, though themselves destined to undergo a change, are more durable than man; or, as Solomon expresses it, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever." The only incident which we deem worthy of notice in this tour, is a circumstance which occurred at Ardmillan Hill, within four miles of Girvan, and which is referred to in the Course of Time. Some of Mr. Pollok's friends rolled down some large stones from the top of the hill which slopes into the sea—possibly from mere wantonness—or it might be, to bring to the test of experiment the remark of the critics, that in Pope's famous lines the sound is an echo to the sense—

> "The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
> Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground."

After, however, descending the hill down which the stones had rolled with prodigious velocity, as they imagined immediately into the sea, they found at the bottom, over the precipice, a small plain, with a beautiful bay formed by the sea—and into this the stones had been dashed in a thousand pieces. The subject of this Memoir had no sooner seen the nature of the place than he exclaimed—"O M——, what if two lovers had met here, to live one day of parting love, and had fallen by thy cruel hand!" This incident appears to have made a deep impression upon his mind, for on parting with the gentleman, he recalled it to his remembrance, and requested him never to engage in such a pastime again. Without doubt all this is highly creditable to the feelings of our poet; and were the generality of men possessed of the like good sense and prudence, we are disposed to think there would be fewer tragical occurrences in the world.

The next circumstance in the life of Mr. Pollok which claims our attention is that of his writing "The Course of Time." "Poetry," we find him saying, had been the darling of his soul for a long time. "I could not, however," he says, "bear the idea of writing hastily, or of being forced to let any thing out of my hands before I had made every thing as perfect as I could by time and pains." His mind, though stored with poetical thoughts and images, long wavered in the choice of a subject, until it was suggested by perusing the lines of Lord Byron on "Darkness," beginning with the words

> "I had a dream which was not all a dream."

The first intimation of his commencing the Course of Time, is made in a letter to his brother from Moorhouse, dated 8th January 1825, in which he informs him that three weeks before the New Year, he had been occupied on a delightful theme, which had greatly elevated his views to heavenly things, and that he was writing in blank verse as the most suitable; and that he anticipated it would outlive him in this world, and would be such as he need not be ashamed of in the next. Counting therefore three weeks from the date last mentioned,

the poem on which his fame now rests, was begun by him about the 10th of December, 1824. As the reader may be curious to have as full information as possible respecting a poem which the public have received with so much favor, we shall gratify him as far as we can consistently with the brevity of our Narrative; and here we must acknowledge our obligations to his brother, who was his friend and counsellor in this matter:—"While he (Robert) was reading these, (the verses of Lord Byron) the resurrection was suggested to him, and struck him that it might be taken for a subject to write on. He instantly began to think, and hastily running over in his mind various authors who had treated of it, was not satisfied with any of them. He thought that something new or different might be said on the subject, or at least that it might be set in a more striking light. A plan occurred to him. He immediately laid down the book, took up the first pen that he got his hands on, and began to write what now forms the second paragraph of the seventh book of the poem, commencing,—

> "In customed glory bright, that morn the sun
> Rose."

And he proceeded till he had upwards of a thousand verses, intending the subject of the poem to be the Resurrection. Soon after completing what was then intended to be the first book, but what is now the seventh of 'The Course of Time,' he removed from Glasgow to Moorhouse, to be beside his mother who was then on her death-bed; but he still prosecuted the writing of the poem. As he went on, he began at intervals to select and arrange materials; and in doing this, he saw many things that he would like to bring in, that would not come in naturally under the subject of the Resurrection. He determined, however, to make use of these, and either to extend the plan or form a new one altogether. In the meantime thoughts and words poured in on him from all quarters, and he went on writing and selecting. * * * One night, while he was sitting meditating alone in Moorhouse old room, in a moment, as if by immediate inspiration, the idea of the poem struck him, and the plan of it, as it now stands stretched out before him, so that at one glance he saw through it like an avenue, with the resurrection as only part of the scene. He never felt, he said, as he did then, and he shook from head to foot overpowered with feeling, 'knowing that to pursue the subject was to have no middle way between great success and great failure.' From this time, in selecting and arranging materials, he saw through the plan so well that he knew to what book the thoughts belonged whenever they occurred to him. But the poem wanted a name, and it was not till after it was written that he called it 'The Course of Time.'"

We find himself, in a letter dated 7th February, 1825, thus referring to the poem:—"The subject of the poem in which I am engaged is the Resurrection—a glorious argument; and if that Divine Spirit who giveth all thought and all utterance be not offended with my prayers, it shall not be ungloriously managed. It affords me, besides giving great room to the imagination, a plan for the rigid depictment of the characters of men at that time, when all but character shall have left them. I have already, much to my satisfaction, well nigh completed the first book of nearly a thousand verses." In another letter of date the 14th of May of the same year, we find him writing:—"I have nearly completed a third book of my poem, and I have been, in general, able to please myself. The description of the good Minister I intend to send to you when I shall have time to copy it out for you. When the present book is fin-

ished I intend to rest a little—perhaps during the two summer months, as I find, whenever the weather gets warm, my capacity for severe thinking diminishes." It may here be noticed, that Mr. Pollok's mother died while he was occupied with these studies. In a former part of our narrative we have said, that christian mothers were entitled to high consideration in Scotland for the attention they bestowed on the religious education of their children. The following testimonial of Mr. Pollok to this is perhaps worthy of insertion in this place. Referring to his poem, after it was published, he says :—"It has my mother's divinity, the divinity which she taught me when I was a boy. I may have amplified it from what I learned afterwards; but in writing the poem I always found that her's formed the ground-work, the point from which I set out. I always drew on her's first, and I was never at a loss. This shows what kind of a divine she was." The first books of the Course of Time which were written were the seventh, eighth, and ninth. In a letter to his brother, dated 24th January, 1826, after making deep complaints of great depression, arising from external causes, we find him thus writing :—"Now, be assured of this, that I would send a book or two to you with far more pleasure than you would receive them; but I have nothing but one copy, and it would be risking it imprudently to send it so long a way. You will see the possibility of its miscarrying, and the consequent irreparable loss,—I mean to myself, for I do reckon it valuable, and it is perfectly impossible that I can transcribe it just now; neither my health nor my time will permit me. I have said this much, that you may acquit me of any shadow of blame for not sending you any of the poem at this time. I repeat it again, that you may see it is one of the strongest motives which impels me to write; and there are parts of it in which I have your gratification before me at the very moment I am writing; but you see plainly that, at present, I cannot send any of it. If we are spared we shall soon meet. I cannot finish my poem in less than eight books—five are written. Excuse me for talking so long of myself and the subject of my study." It is one of the evils of a sedentary life, more especially when mental labour is superadded, that there is bodily weakness and suffering connected with it; accordingly we find Mr. Pollok, who had been busied with his poem since the date of last letter, continuing to make complaints :—3rd March, 1826; "Of myself I have little to say, and that little not very pleasant. I have finished, since I began last winter, three books of my poem, and find at present my health very much in need of repair. My breast troubles me. I have just had on a blister, and I hope it will do some good. I do not intend to write any more for some time, and shall pay every attention to my health." Mr. Pollok, notwithstanding his weak health, continued to labour with great assiduity at his favourite task, and with such success that he finished it several months sooner than he anticipated. We find him announcing this important event in his life in a letter addressed to his brother, dated 7th July, 1826 :—

"It is with much pleasure," he says, "that I am now able to tell you that I have finished my poem. Since I wrote to you last I have written about three thousand five hundred verses, which is considerably more than a hundred every successive day. This you will see was extraordinary expedition to be continued so long; and I neither can nor wish to ascribe it to anything but an extraordinary manifestation of Divine goodness. Although some nights I was on the borders of fever, I rose every morning equally fresh, without one twitch of headache; and with all impatience of a lover, hasted to my study. Towards the end of the tenth book—for the whole consists of ten books—when the subject was overwhelmingly great, and where I indeed seemed to write

from immediate inspiration, I felt the body beginning to give way. But now that I have finished, though with the great heat, and the almost uninterrupted mental exercise, I am by no means languishing and feeble. Since the first of June, which was the day I began last, we have had a Grecian atmosphere; and I find the serenity of the heavens of incaluable benefit for mental pursuit. And I am now convinced that summer is the best season for great mental exertion: because the heat promotes the circulation of the blood, the stagnation of which is the great cause of misery to cogitative men. The serenity of mind which I have possessed is astonishing. Exalted on my native mountains, and writing often on the top of the very highest of them, I proceeded from day to day, as if I had been in a world in which there was neither sin, nor sickness, nor poverty. In the four books last written, I have succeeded in almost every instance up to my wishes; and in many places I have exceeded anything that I had conceived. This is not boasting, remember. I only say I have exceeded the degree of excellence which I had formerly thought of. * * * If we be all well, my poem may be ready for the press soon after the New Year, which is the best time for publication. Thus has it gone with me and my pursuits—every thing has favoured me. But the same weather which has been of such incalculable advantage to me, has in a great measure destroyed the hopes of the husbandman—the crops look ill, and the pasture grounds are browner than in winter."

We shall reserve our remarks on "The Course of Time" to the close of our Narrative, and only add a few particulars as to the time and manner of its composition. The period within which Mr. Pollok was engaged in writing this poem was between the 10th of December, 1824, and the 7th of July, 1826—that is, one year and seven months, less three days. It may be allowed also, that during this time, Mr. Pollok was exposed to several interruptions arising from his preparations for the Divinity Hall, so that the period seems to have been considerably less. His whole soul, however, was engaged in the work; and accordingly it appears that he economised his time to the uttermost; even in bed his active mind was busied with the favourite theme; and during the time that he was occupied in going to and from Church, between Moorhouse and Eaglesham, he was engaged in mental composition. And here we may just remark, that in the present improved state of society, when we have the art of writing carried to such perfection, and pen and ink in such constant readiness, *mental* composition sounds as strange and unaccountable; and yet it is most certain that the ancient bards of Scotland, whose songs have come down to us, had no other mode of composing than just in this manner; and if it is the case that Ossian sang, as certainly as his father the great Fingal fought, his poems in like mann r must have been composed mentally. Homer himself is said to have got up his poems of the Iliad and Odyssey in the same way; and if our memory does not fail us, the learned historian Mitford is of this opinion. It would appear, therefore, that the memories of men would bewonderfully strengthened if they put more trust in them. Those who were unacquainted with writing were obliged to do so; and we see, as in the case of Homer, and the Minstrels of Scotland, that they were not disappointed. The Author of the Course of Time, it is true, was not *obliged* to do this; but then, what amounts to the same thing, he was under such a strong motive to have his poem finished, that he adopted the same course. He composed mentally too, and his memory, like that of the Minstrels of old, was found competent for the work imposed upon it. Accordingly, after composing portions in this way, he afterwards wrote them down that they might be preserved. And here

we may be allowed farther to notice, that the Author himself remained, during all the time, the same kind and sociable person as he had ever been. "His relatives told us," says Mr. George, of Scarborough, "that Robert, as they called him, loved to sit with them by the kitchen fire, and there read portions of what he had written, chat, and smoke his pipe, and in the evenings join in their social mirth and family conversation."

Having said this much to gratify the reasonable curiosity of the reader respecting the time and manner of the getting up the poem, let us now attend to some matters which, in the course of our narrative, we have passed over. Mr. Pollok attended the Divinity Hall of the United Secession Church during the sessions occurring between the years 1822 and 1826, both inclusive; that is, during five successive sessions. The Exercises required of each student, besides hearing the Professor's lectures, were the reading of the Scriptures in the original languages, and delivering one short discourse each session. During the other part of the year again, that is from October till the meeting of the Hall in August, the students were expected to deliver a discourse before the Presbytery within whose bounds they resided, and to perform such other Exercises as might be required of them. But besides attending the Hall of the United Secession, Mr. Pollok, with the view of furnishing himself with all the learning of his profession, attended the Divinity Hall of the University of Glasgow; that is, of the Church of Scotland, during the sessions of 1824-5 and 1825-6. The discourses he delivered at different times to one or other of the bodies were on the following texts:—Romans v. 19; 2 Corinthians ix. 15; Romans ii. 25–29; 1 Peter iv. 18; 1 Thessalonians v. 25; Matthew v. 8; Hebrews vi. 12; 1 Kings viii. 21; 1 Peter ii. 17; Hebrews ii. 9; Psalm lxxii. 17. It may here be mentioned that he wrote only one Discourse for the Divinity Hall of the Church of Scotland. The text is one of those we have just mentioned—Matthew v. 8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The times of which we are now speaking were prior to what is called "the disruption;" that is to say, to speak in the language of the Free Church, before "the Church of Scotland" renounced her connection with the State. In these days Dr. Macgill presided over the Divinity Hall; and sure we are, that a person of greater dignity of manners, and of more ardent zeal for divine truth, was not at that time to be found in the British islands. And, considering that Mr. Pollok attended two sessions upon the Lectures of Dr. Macgill,—that is to say, during the period of twelve months, a longer time than that which he attended Dr. Dick, (for the sessions of the latter were not over seven or eight weeks, whereas those of the former were six months,) it would be great injustice to Dr. Macgill not to acknowledge his services in training such a pupil as Mr. Pollok,—more especially as we observe, in the published Memoir, many acknowledgments made of the services of Dr. Dick, but none of those of Dr. Macgill. Both of these Divines have since gone the way of all the earth, and therefore it would not be becoming to institute any invidious comparisons, but this much we may say, that if the one was learned in his profession, so was the other learned; and if the one had a fair fame among his pupils and cotemporaries, that of the other was without a stain; and if the one was honoured in training up many respectable Ministers of the Gospel, so was the other. We have heard both of these Divines officiate in the Church, as well as in the Hall, but as we have heard Dr. Macgill much oftener, so it may naturally be expected that we should have a partiality for him, and we certainly have, but this may arise from the cause we have just specified, and therefore we admit other men to have their partialities too; but we would resist

everything like partizanship in dealing with the memories and with the services of distinguished men; and we cannot help feeling that there is a shade of this conspicuous in the manner in which the services of Dr. Macgill, in the theological training of Mr. Pollok, are glossed over in the published Memoir. And here, in speaking of Dr. Macgill, we may be allowed to introduce a few verses from a poem written by Dr. Lang, of New South Wales, dedicated to the College of Glasgow:—

"And there with countenance benign,
Where piety and learning shine,
Would sit the good Macgill;
God's holy counsel skilled to teach,
And eke to lead as well as preach
The way to Zion's hill.

Friend of my youth! with counsel sage
Oft didst thou guide my ripening age
In God's most holy way;
Still peaceful be thy honoured lot,
Till both the Teacher and the taught
Meet in the realms of day.

Friend of my youth! full many a song
Will greet thee when thy course is run,
In yonder holy land!
Some have already reached it's shore,
Some tarry here, some go before,
As God may give command.

For thou hast trained full many a youth
To preach the way, the life, the truth,
In Kedar's wilds afar!
Their trophies there are also thine,
And thou shalt therefore henceforth shine
Bright as the morning star."

The Course of Time being now finished, as we have already narrated, its author set himself to prepare for its publication. He preferred having it printed in Edinburgh rather than in Glasgow; and in order that he might be at hand while his book was passing through the press, he proceeded to Dunfermline, where one of his relatives resided. Here he revised and corrected the whole poem, and copied it over a second time. In this latter department we find him acknowledging the services of a female Amanuensis; so that, if we may be excused a pun, he must needs have had a *fair* copy. "I have been much assisted," he writes, "in this wearisome process (of copying) by a lady here (Miss Jeanie Swan,) who has undertaken the writing out of four books of it, and will soon have them finished. It is astonishing with what facility she reads my old crabbed manuscript." The publisher whom Mr. Pollok wished to employ was Mr. Blackwood, in Princes Street. Accordingly, we find him writing to that well-known person of date the 22d November, 1826, to the following effect: "With this you will receive the manuscript of which I spoke to you some two or three weeks ago. It is a poem in ten books, embracing a great variety of subjects. You will judge of the manner in which these are handled; and as I hope the poem will explain itself, I deem it un-

necessary to say anything of the plan. It is, as far as I know, new; the sentiments which I have expressed of religion—which is especially treated of in the second book, are such as seemed to me agreeable to the Word of God; and, in few instances, I believe will they be found differing from the approved creed of our country. In the language, I have intentionally avoided a pompous and swelling phraseology, and have aimed mainly at strength and perspicuity. If the work take at all, it must take extensively, as all mankind are alike interested in the subject of it. The first six books, in my own hand, may be a little difficult to read; the four last, which were copied by a young hand, are rather crowded in the words, and there are some inaccuracies; but the person who is able to judge of the merit of the work, will also be able to correct for himself anything of this kind." Mr. Blackwood, upon receiving the manuscript, sent it for perusal to Professor Wilson and Mr. Moir of Musselburgh, author of the Poems under the signature Delta, and these gentlemen having reported favourably as to the merits of the performance, he signified to Mr. Pollok his intention of putting it to press about the New Year. It was agreed at the same time that a small edition only should be published, and Mr. Pollok should have the half of the profits. Accordingly, in a letter to his father, dated January 3d, 1827, we find the Author writing thus: "I have been waiting anxiously for some time, that I might have something decided to say about my poem; and now I am happy to tell you that it is in the press. Mr. Blackwood, the only publisher in Scotland to whom I would have given it, has agreed to publish it. I have reserved the copyright in my own hand, and of course have secured the profits for twenty-eight years —if there be any profits. You have heard me speak of Professor Wilson: he is one of the greatest literary men of the age, and the principal contributor to Blackwood's Magazine—one of the most powerful Reviews in Britain. But better than this, his opinion of my work is extremely high—as high as my own; and you know that is high enough. I had a conversation with him today, and he has no doubt that, whatever may be the reception of the work at first, it will ultimately take a high and a lasting place among the English poetry. He was pleased indeed to compliment me very highly, and expressed great happiness that I come from Renfrewshire, which is his native shire also. But what is of more advantage to me than this, he has kindly offered to assist me with all his might, in revising and correcting the sheets as they come through the press. It will gratify John a little to tell him that Mr. Wilson pointed out the character of Lord Byron as 'a very extraordinary piece of writing;' he will remember that he thought it the best of the whole.'"* It may be thought that Mr. Pollok had now reached a position in which he might relax himself in some measure from the cares and anxieties which had hitherto harrassed him—but it would seem that these attend upon things prosperous as well as adverse—for though the Author of the Course of Time might be said to have now reached the goal of his wishes, and to have the wreath which is twined around learned brows,—the emblem of immortality, within his grasp—he appears to have been in such a state of nervous excitement, that sleep fled from his eyes for nights together. Sleep is sweet to the weary. Hence the poet Young—

"Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep."

* Since writing the above we have been informed by the Rev. Mr. Lillie of Toronto, a gentleman of great talent and learning, that the poem was sent in the first instance to Professor Wilson, but that he not having time to give it a perusal, it was afterwards sent to Mr. Moir, who read it with care, and pronounced it to be a poem of high merit, but of a peculiar kind.—It was subsequent to this that the poem was sent to Mr. Wilson. Mr. Lillie received this from Mr. Moir himself.

To be deprived of such a blessing must entail as much discomfort as the want of food; and yet this was our Author's condition at the time referred to, for he tells us he "lay every night broad awake engaged in thought." The publication of the poem, which was on the 24th March, 1827, must have been peculiarly agreeable to Mr. Pollok, as it set him free from a work which appears to have cost him great trouble, the correcting of the sheets as they came from the press. But what was peculiarly unfortunate at this time was, that another heavy task was laid upon him just as he had got himself free of the previous one—this was his preparations for the Presbytery, before obtaining license to preach the Gospel. Besides composing an English discourse on the Text, noted above, Psalm 72, 17, "His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed"—a text we may observe in passing, that was peculiarly appropriate to be put into the hands of the Author of the Course of Time, and which the Presbytery probably selected with this view. Mr. Pollok about the same time wrote his Exigesis, on the text, "An Ecclesia vel Scriptura in re fidei judex? Whether is the Church or Scripture the judge in matters of faith?" It is true that these exercises would have imposed but a light task on Mr. Pollok had he been in his usual state of health; but he was not so. To use the figure of a noble Author, the vessel was already full, and this last drop made the waters of bitterness soon overflow. But of this afterwards.—Mr. Pollok, received his license to preach on the 2d of May of the year noted above; and though now he had more need of a sick nurse than of a pulpit, yet strange to say, on the very next day (it being a Fast-day in Edinburgh) he was called upon to preach in Rose Street Chapel to a large congregation.—Verily a man may well say, "Save us from our friends!" Mr. Pollok preached entirely from memory. He had his sermon written—it was one of those mentioned in the list—1st Kings, 8, 21; and he had thoroughly committed it as he thought. It so happened, however, that in one part of the discourse he faltered—this seems to have been to him a moment of agony; however, by a strong exercise of mind he recovered the idea, and without exciting any sensation, he acquited himself with great credit. His delivery of the sermon, says a relative of his own, was "calm, grave, earnest, feeling, mild, dignified, and impressive, accompanied with graceful gestures. * * * He arrested deeply the attention of the audience, and commanded great stillness." On the following Sunday we find him at Slateford, a village which lies within three miles of the city of Edinburgh, at the foot of the Pentland Hills. Here he was on a visit to Dr. Belfrage, an esteemed Minister of the Secession Church. Writing to his father, of date the 8th May, 1827, we find him thus expressing himself: "On Wednesday, David and I, along with several others, were licensed to preach the Gospel. It was not without much hesitation that I passed from among the laity and the sacred order, but I am now perfectly satisfied with the step I have taken. Next day after being licensed, which was the Fast-day in Edinburgh, I preached in the forenoon in the Rev. John Brown's Church, Rose Street. The house is large, and was very full; I, however, got upon the whole decently through with the service. Dr. Belfrage of Slateford, where I now write, was present, as he was to preach in the afternoon, and I was fortunate enough to engage his friendship so much, that I was compelled to promise to spend a week or two with him. I preached here on Sabbath both parts of the day. I the more willingly accepted his invitation, both because it was so disinterested and kind, and because my health required some repose. With the wordy anxieties and fatigues of the winter I

am considerably exhausted, but have every thing here that can conduce to reinvigoration—a most delightful house, surrounded with the most exquisite scenery—Dr. Belfrage the kindest man in the world, and a most enlightened spirit—his son, a fine clever young fellow—and a horse to ride on as much as I please every day. I shall therefore remain here a week or two; perhaps it may be nearly the end of May before I be home. * * My poem is attracting much attention in Edinburgh and round about, and is selling upon the whole well; it has been noticed and quoted by several papers both in London and Edinburgh, and their remarks are very laudatory."

The last sermon Mr. Pollok preached was on the following Sunday at Slateford. It was one of the sermons he had written for the Presbytery, the text of which we have given above—(Psalms lxxii. 17.) He had, therefore, a short, alas! a very short Ministry. He preached only four times; once on Thursday, the 3rd of May, at Edinburgh; twice on the following Sunday at Slateford, and once more at the same place on the 13th,—four times in all—and all this after a course of ten years' preparation! We are almost tempted, in such a view of matters, to ask what profit is there in expending so much pains in the education of Ministers, when it is thus so egregiously wasted. Better surely to have Ministers of fervent piety, with less of learning, than to see them, in consequence of their efforts to acquire the latter, die like a flower almost before its buds have unfolded themselves, or its odours been scattered on the breeze. But perhaps a better reflection is that which is made by one of his fellow-students, to whom we have already had occasion to refer:—"He," the subject of the memoir, "was not destined to labour in the pulpit. God gave him one grand work to accomplish; when that was finished he was called to a better world, as we fondly hope, there to engage in the services and enjoy the poetry and music of Angels, and of the spirits of the just made perfect." Mr. Pollok remained at Slateford, in the house of Dr. Belfrage, upwards of two months. In a letter to his father, we find him giving some account of the state of his health, and what he then says confirms the opinion we have presumed to express above, namely, that Mr. Pollok should have been spared by his friends. "As my labour increased," he says, "in the spring months, so did my complaints; first almost total indigestion, then loss of appetite; and then, or rather simultaneous with these, a quick, high, and feverish pulse: so that when I took license in the beginning of May, I was utterly worn out, in a state of high fever, and just ready to fall into the hands of the physicians." Weak as he was, the Author enjoyed great satisfaction in the attention which his poem excited,—as well among the various periodicals that bestowed upon it lengthened critiques, as in the increased honour and consideration which it procured for himself. Thus we find him writing, in another letter to his father: "My poem continues to draw attention—several reviews of it have appeared. One London paper has very graciously placed me in the good company of Dante and Milton. Some are a little severe, but none have ventured to condemn. I enjoy the remarks very much, and am blessed with the utmost repose of mind. Private opinion of the poem in this quarter is very high, and its sale is going on well. Blackwood's face is shining considerably—the best sign of a Bookseller. Solely on the work's account I have been invited, by some individuals of high standing in society, and am upon the whole prosperous in all my affairs." * * * Again, in another letter:—"I have not time to tell you of the numerous attentions which I have received from literary men. What has gratified me most, is the very striking attention which I have lately received from the venerable Mr. Mackenzie, aged eighty-four, Author of the

"Man of Feeling." I felt his attention to be as if some literary patriarch had risen from the grave, to bless me and do me honour. * * * I have received £20 from Blackwood which has relieved my mind from present anxiety."

As Mr. Pollok's health seemed rather to decline during his residence at Slateford, and as it was thought by his friends and medical advisers that he might yet rally, if he was moved to a southern clime, it seems to have been decided that he should go to Italy, and there spend the ensuing winter. It was thought advisable, however, that he should take a short sail northwards to Aberdeen, in order to try whether he would have the requisite strength for enduring a voyage up the Mediterranean. This arrangement seemed in many respects advisable, as we find Mr. Pollok writing, two days before setting out from Slateford, that he was improving in health and vigour. "I thank God," he says, writing to his father, "that I am able to inform you that my health advances steadily, and with much more rapidity than I could possibly have expected. It is only about three weeks since I began to discover that my constitution, under the blessing of a kind and infinitely merciful Providence, had begun to master the disease. My appetite is now excellent. I eat more in one day than I did in a week when I came to Slateford. I have been in Edinburgh almost every day for the last week." A critic having accused the Author of borrowing, he replies:—"This is absolute nonsense. I am conscious that I did not borrow a thought from any poet, dead or alive, in the whole of 'The Course of Time.' Likenesses here and there occur among all poets; and when it so happens, the critic always charges the author with imitation. This is one of the evils of authorship, which we know before we publish, and we submit to it with cheerfulness." Mr. Pollok, it may be mentioned, received another visit from Mr. Mackenzie, an honour which he seems to have rightly appreciated; and yet it was nothing more than might have been expected of "*The Man of Feeling*" to sympathize with a brother poet in his afflictions. On the 18th of July Mr. Pollok left Newhaven for Aberdeen, by the steamer, and reached the latter city on the same evening. Here, though our Author received much kindness and many attentions, from friends and admirers, he does not seem to have received benefit otherwise. He holds out encouraging hopes, indeed, in one letter to his father, but it would seem that these were wholly delusive, as indeed the nature of the hand-writing appeared to indicate. Accordingly, after a stay of two weeks, he returned to Edinburgh, from whence he proceeded to Moorhouse, where he arrived on Friday the 10th day of August. His friends there, who had not seen him for ten months, within which time he had become a preacher of the Gospel, and had attained to high honour as a poet, were eagerly and fondly expecting his arrival. We here transcribe the following passage:—"About mid-day some one, more watchful than the rest, said, 'there is a chaise, that will be Robert now,' and almost as soon as the words were uttered, the chaise came up with him to the door—all in the house, old and young, running out and gathering about it, eager to see him. Scarcely had we felt the first bound of joy at his arrival, when his look went to our heart with a pang. After asking for us in his usual way, he walked into the room, and sat down beside the old table at which he used to write; and oh! how affecting was it to see the man who had, in his ordinary health, only thirteen months before, finished there 'The Course of Time,' return so weak in little more than five months after its publication." In a letter which Mr. Pollok wrote to a female friend while at Moorhouse, the following passage occurs:—"As I am extremely well," (alas! says his brother he was extremely ill, as the hand-writing and diction of this very letter testify through-

out,) "this morning, and have a little time on hand before the chaise shall arrive here for me, I think it my duty to say a word or two to you. I do not mean to advise, but merely to say that your disadvantages in America must be very great. I do not mean to speak of the bad effects which its extremely changeable climate might have on your constitution. At Philadelphia, a city very near Mr. Gilmour's, they have sometimes all temperatures in twenty-four hours. I dislike the lean food that you would find offered to your soul in these regions, which, I can positively say, are ill supplied with the bread of life which came down from heaven. I would further say that you need not fear to stay behind your earthly relations. The bread and water of the child of God are sure." The charge here made against Philadelphia, as holding forth lean food for the soul, we conceive to be of too general a nature to merit much attention. Before making such charges, it is always best to look at home; and if so, we much fear the Author would have found small ground for boasting. For our own part, judging by the religious publications that we have read from the press of Philadelphia, we have been accustomed to believe that the tone of religious feeling is higher than in the large towns in Great Britain. Mr. Pollok remained only five days with his friends on the occasion of this his last visit, when he set out in company with his sister, Mrs. Gilmour, on his projected tour to Italy, which, alas! he was destined never to reach. In passing through Glasgow, he received an address from his fellow-students, congratulating him on the great success of his poem, and expressing their christian sympathy for him in his afflictions. In Edinburgh, at the request of his entertainer, the Rev. Dr. Brown, he sat for his portrait—the original then drawn is now in the possession of that gentleman. At the house of his friend, Dr. Belfrage, he experienced a repetition of those kind attentions which he experienced on his former visit, and of which we have already had occasion to speak. Sir John Sinclair, a gentleman in whose breast the pure flame of patriotism seemed always to glow, and who was ever ready to undertake whatever might contribute to the advantage of his native land, in an especial manner bestowed on Mr. Pollok special marks of kindness. Sir John's goodness of heart did not evaporate in a few empty compliments, which are easily pronounced, and which really contribute nothing whatever to him in behalf of whom they were penned. Sir John gave palpable demonstration of his goodness of heart in the shape of what was really needful to the poet, in the season of his afflictions. And we deem it the more important to draw the attention of the reader to this, because his Biographer seems to lay more stress upon the reading of an address than the bestowing of a gift, and consequently to convey the highly injurious impression, that the former is the polite commodity, while the latter is the vulgar one. Our opinion is the reverse of this; and, therefore, we hail the conduct of Sir John, on this occasion, as an example worthy of imitation.

We shall, therefore, briefly state the good deed of the Honourable Baronet on this occasion. First of all, then, when it was resolved among Mr. Pollok's friends that he should go to Italy, Sir John immediately drew up a circular in order to raise a fund to defray the expenses. This document details the manner in which he came to hear of the Course of Time, his perusal of the work, his opinion of it as displaying great marks of original genius; his inquiring into the circumstances of the Author, and the result, that his health was such as to render residence in a milder climate indispensable. Sir John proceeds to confirm his own estimate of the merits of the poem, by the opinion of it formed by the Reviews that had appeared; and refers to certain passages as evincing Mr. Pollok's powers to be of the highest order: these are, *First*, Character of

Lord Byron, book 4; *Second*, Description of England and Scotland, book 5; *Third*, Evening Hymn in Paradise, book 6. These passages he copies in an abridged form. It does not appear what amount this circular was the means of raising in behalf of the dying poet. It would appear, however, to have been considerable, or at all events sufficient for the object contemplated. But besides all this, Sir John manifested certain delicate attentions, which none but a man of a noble soul ever thinks of. For example, before leaving Edinburgh, we find the Honourable Baronet writing the following card:

"Sir John Sinclair thinks it right to send Mr. Pollok materials for writing, the want of which is often felt by travellers; also cards for writing his name, when he settles at Leghorn or any other place."

133 George Street, Edinburgh,
20th August, 1827.

The Honourable Baronet knew that a young man who had spent his days in comparative retirement, and led a studious life, could not be supposed to have much experience. He remembered, too, his weak state, (though, alas! he thought not he was so near the grave,) and wrote out the following Memorandum for the supposed Traveller:

Memorandum for Mr. Robert Pollok.

1. Sir John Sinclair has written to his son, George Sinclair, Esquire, to endeavour to get letters in favour of Mr. Pollok, to the British Consuls at Leghorn, Genoa, Pisa, and Naples, from John Bankhouse, Esq., Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Department. It would be most material to get them.

2. But the great object is, to get the assistance of the Literary fund for the expenses of the journey, and for that purpose it is of the utmost importance that Mr. Pirie, (Lord Mayor of London,) should see, in person, Mr. George Sinclair and Sir Benjamin Hobhouse, with as little delay as possible.

3. Mr. Pollok should take a copy or two of his work with him—one for correction.

4. Remember the "Muffler" in cold and damp weather, particularly at sea.

J. S.

133 George Street, Edinburgh,
20th August, 1827.

Mr. Pollok received much attention from a great many friends, whom respect for his genius had drawn around him, before leaving Edinburgh. We give here an extract from a letter of Introduction written by his Bookseller, Mr. Blackwood, to a lady in Florence, Mrs. Bell:—"The reason," he says, "of my now addressing you is, that a very dear friend of mine, the Rev. Robert Pollok, is on the point of setting off for Italy, for the recovery of his health; and as he will probably take up his residence somewhere in your neighbourhood, I feel very anxious he should have the pleasure of knowing you, as I am sure you will feel an interest in him, both for his own sake, and as a sick countryman, to whom any little attention in a foreign land will be so grateful. Mr. Pollok is the Author of a very remarkable poem, 'The Course of Time,' which, I regret now, I did not send you with the other books in Mr. Molline's parcel. I sent a copy of it to Mr. M., and you will see a Review of it in the June number of my Magazine. The Critic, it is generally thought, has done the Author sufficient justice; but the extracts speak for themselves. My venerable friend, Mr. Henry Mackenzie, and a number of our first Literary men here, have taken the greatest interest in Mr. Pollok, on account of

their high admiration of his poem. Should Mr. Pollok be so fortunate as to have the honour of meeting with you, I hope you will find him in better health than he is at present; and that you will thank me for introducing him to you." On Wednesday, the 22nd August, at about 9 o'clock, a. m., Mr. Pollok left Leith, the port of Edinburgh, by the steamer, and after an unusually rough passage he reached London on Friday, at 1 o'clock, p. m. His sister, Mrs. Gilmour, who accompanied him there, wrote to her father as follows:—"On Friday (the 24th) we passed through London to Camberwell, where we have remained since in John Pirie's, Esq., sea Merchant, whose house and equipage remind me of ancient Tyre, 'whose merchants were Princes.' Robert has not been dissuaded from going to Italy, and our passage is taken in the trading ship Amy, which is to sail this evening or to-morrow morning. The Captain's name is Bloomfield, an honest, respectable character; and we are to have the best accommodation in the vessel. This going to Italy is quite different from my intention when I left Clarkston; but I have been urged by some, and applauded by others; and particularly I have been induced by the state of Robert's health, which requires some friend to go with him, otherwise I would not go for the world to the land of graven images, to a people whose language we know not, and whose manners are so different from our own. But the thing that encouraged me most was what Dr. Belfrage told me, namely, that we were not to go to Italy, but to the South of England, as the only means that could save Robert—and of course it was natural to try it. Robert is scarcely ever displeased with me, except when I show reluctance to go to Italy, which henceforth I intend not to do." To the above Robert added a note:—"We arrived in London on Friday at mid-day, and notwithstanding the roughness of the passage, which was the roughest the Captain made this season, I sustained it well. I have seen much of London. We have fine accommodations for Italy, and intend to sail to-morrow. I have had some work to keep Mrs. Gilmour to the point. We shall likely be four or five weeks at sea. * * * * We shall write as soon as we land. Have you got a (hired) man?" It may be mentioned, in explanation of this query, that Robert had vested, by trust Deed, before leaving Moorhouse, a small sum in the hands of David Pollok, to procure a servant for their father. The deed had this singular provision, that the servant "*Shall not be of Highland descent!*" Although all things were now ready for the voyage, it was subsequently advised, by an eminent physician in London, Dr. Gordon, that he should relinquish the idea, as he was wholly unfit for undergoing the fatigues and discomfort. In this advice the sufferer seems willingly to have acquiesced. It was afterwards arranged he should go to Southampton. Accordingly, on the 31st of August, he proceeded in a carriage, accompanied by Mrs. Gilmour, to that place, which he reached on the following day, in a state of great exhaustion. They took lodgings at Shirley Common, a mile west of Southampton, at Mr. Hyde's. The following sentence will furnish the reader with the true state of Mr. Pollok at this time. The day after his arrival, (Sunday) being fine, "he took a walk out on Shirley common, that he might feel, as he said, 'the fresh breezes of heaven,' and he was greatly delighted both with the situation of the place, and with the mildness and salubrity of the air. Mrs. Gilmour accompanied him on his walk, carrying a cushion, which he bought himself in London; and, laying down the cushion every now and then, he sat on it and rested himself while she read to him." Mrs. Hyde kindly allowed the sufferer to take what fruit he pleased in her garden; he, however, on his part, was so full of forbearance, even at this time, that, "*lest he might be tempted,*" he made her

weigh what he wanted. Mrs. Gilmour, speaking of this garden, says :—"If anything on this earth might now be compared to paradise, it was this place, and Robert seemed to enjoy it very much, walking and sitting in it alternately; while the air was so mild and placid that you could hear the apples falling from the trees one after another." Mr. Pollok was now in the last stage of his insidious disease, for the reader may now be informed that it was consumption; and, after having been four or five days in Southampton, he was confined entirely to bed. Here both from his sister, from medical advisers, and others, he received every possible attention. The Rector of the Parish, hearing he was the Author of the Course of Time, brought him grapes and other fruit. Mr. Lloyd, of Merion Square, Dublin, from his christian conversation, and many other marks of kindness, was peculiarly acceptable to Mr. Pollok. Mrs. Hyde, also, appears to have shown him the most marked and tender regard. In a letter dated 11th September, 1827, Mrs. Gilmour thus writes :—"On the morning of the 31st of last month, instead of sailing for Italy, we set off for Southampton, about seventy-six miles from London, which journey we accomplished in a day and a half. But Robert was so much fatigued with the jolting of the carriage that he has been fevered ever since, and has been confined to bed for five or six days past. A surgeon from Southampton has attended him daily during that time; and yesterday he told me he had little hope of my brother's getting better. Still, however, there is hope, for the fever is abated in some measure. Yesterday and to-day he seems to have more ease. He now speaks often of death, and rather regrets that he was sent so far from his friends. But he is resigned to the will of Providence; and we have very comfortable lodgings, and a kind landlady, who has had a great deal of trouble herself, so that she sympathizes with Robert very much. She is also well acquainted with cooking any nice dish that he can fancy. He has a great desire to see our brother David here; and if you could get notice to him soon, he could come by the mail straight through London, and from thence in a few hours to Southampton. Robert sleeps a great deal to-day, so that I have leisure to write. I am sitting at his bed foot, in a neat clean room in a little cottage, one mile from Southampton. Our landlord is an old man, and remarkably quiet, and his whole family consists of his wife and a maid servant; and he keeps three cows. I mention this because Robert has been so fond of milk since coming here, and he has got it every day he wished. He seems better to-day, and feels some 'rest to his bones,' as he expresses it. I am quite well myself, and feel more comfortable now since Robert seems sensible of his frail state, and is so resigned, and I hope is so 'well prepared' for whatever may be the consequence. I have not needed to sit a whole night with him yet, but have to rise three or four times in the night. My bed is in the same room." Mr. Pollok adds the following on the same sheet, and it appears to have been the last few lines that he wrote :—"My dear Father,—it is with difficulty that I can repeat what my sister has written above, that I wish David (his brother) to come off immediately. Whatever my gracious and merciful God and Saviour has in design with me at this time, David's presence will be equally useful. Let nothing delay his immediate coming. Wherever he is, the Presbytery will at once set him at liberty, in a case of this kind. My sister is often much distressed; but we pray for one another, and take comfort in the gracious promises of God. I hope I am prepared for the issue of this trouble, whether life or death. Pray for me."

Mr. Pollok had read many volumes in his day, but now there was only one volume he thought of. "He bade his sister read from no other book but the Bible, and spoke to her of no other book."

He continued in a very weak and languishing state for one week after writing the note we have just quoted, when on Tuesday the 18th of Sept., 1827, he breathed his last, being then in the twenty-ninth year of his age; and on the Thursday following he was buried in the church-yard of Millbrook, near the sea-shore, three days and a half before his brother arrived. Over his grave, an Obelisk, formed of Peterhead granite, was erected, on which, besides being inscribed the dates of his birth and death, these words were added :—

The Grave of
ROBERT POLLOK, A. M.,
Author of the Course of Time.
His Immortal Poem
Is his
MONUMENT.
Erected by Admirers of his Genius.

The above inscription is from the pen of Dr. Brown, of Edinburgh.— And now, in drawing this Narrative of the Life of Mr. Pollok to a close, it is impossible to omit in our account of him the class of people from among whom he arose. He was born in humble life, like Burns; and until his nineteenth year he had assisted his father in the management of the farm. This is an important consideration, and merits our attention. Now considering the direction Mr. Pollok's genius afterwards took, his condition in life was favorable to him, it favored a sound mental development. One of the great evils of modern society perhaps is, that it is too much under the influence of excitement. The minds of young people are so stirred up with the politics of a real, or the intrigues of a fictitious world, that they have no space to think for themselves. They are so busied with other people's speculations, that they have no leisure to lay up a treasury of their own. The consequence is, their minds are something like those vessels which are employed to filter the water of the Nile, so porous that they seem rather fitted for giving out their contents than for retaining them. Mr. Pollok escaped the dangerous influences of modern society by the humble rank in which he was born : he was born an agriculturist, and this kind of life seems suited to the poetic temperament. It is favorable to a certain strength of mind, by the variety of occupations in which he must engage. A man who has only one or two operations to perform has not wherewith to occupy his mind, and the consequence is, he is a great speculatist and talker. The agriculturist, on the other hand, if he be an industrious man, has so many things to attend to, that he finds his mind wholly occupied; and in reference to every thing else except these occupations, his mental faculties are slow. But there is an advantage in this state. The mind is the composed recipient of the mild and ennobling influences of external nature, meaning by this both the material things and human beings around us. It resembles a smooth and beautiful lake which spreads out its unruffled waters, and images in all their grandeur and gorgeousness, the surrounding mountains, or the blue canopy of the sky. In a pamphlet published some years ago, the writer of this narrative expressed himself to the following effect :—"I cannot therefore but think that in the soul of a good man who follows this calling (of an agriculturist) there is a noble development of the powers of imagination. He never rises from his bed and looks forth from his cottage-door, to the forest trees that bound his horizon, but his employment directs his eye upwards to the eastern sky and con-

strains him to mark the rising of that great luminary 'at whose light all the stars hide their diminished heads.' But not only does the agriculturist come into contact with the magnificent things of nature, but with things that are graceful also—the tender plant, as it unfolds its leaves to imbibe the refreshing influence of light and heat, is marked by him from its incipient to its mature state—the refreshing dews, the alternations of shade and of sunshine, the cycle of the seasons, which in one revolution works such wonderful changes both on the cultivated fields and on the forest. For around his dwelling, it may be truly said in the words of the poet—

'————————The young spring
Looks ever bright with leaves and blossoming,
And winter always wends his sullen horn;
And the wild autumn, with a look forlorn,
Dies in his stormy manhood; and the skies
Weep and flowers sicken, when the summer flies.'

Now, if it be true that the things without impress the mind as the seal does the pliant wax, the inference is unavoidable. An agriculturist whose feelings are not deadened by sensual indulgence, must be a man of sensibility—a man whose imagination glows with forms the most sublime and lovely. His employment besides is fitted to teach him activity and foresight in a manner sufficiently impressive. The seasons proceed in a kind of progression—the showers of spring are succeeded by the heats of summer, and these again by the ripening influence of autumn—and then come the desolations of winter. None of these seasons, apart from the rest. are sufficient for the operations of the agriculturist—the growth and maturity of his crops require them all. Suppose that he omitted to sow his field in spring, it would be too late to begin to do it in summer, and if the operations of summer are neglected, the harvest would come in vain. The nature of his employment thus requires the exercise of activity and foresight: and these qualities I need hardly say are the elements of all practical wisdom."

Mr. Pollok, however, was not born in a country that might be said to be in the state of simplicity that a people who are far removed from the influence of large towns are usually found to be. He did not dwell in pastoral regions where the artless manners of shepherds and shepherdesses are uncontaminated by any foreign mixture—a people who have merely heard of artificial life, but who know not its usages—and who, from the very aspirations which they may manifest after things higher than their own, display their ignorance of the usages of the world. The people among whom he was trained and born may be said to be in that medium state that stands between the agricultural and the commercial—a people, who, though they had the simple usages of agricultural life, had along with them all the vigor and intelligence of the manufacturing. Some philosophers would say of such a state, that it is the worst of any—that it has neither the polish of the city nor the simplicity of rustic life—that it has all the vices of the one without the innocence of the other—and certainly the theorist who sees no other excellency in society, than that which accords with a dreamy imagination, may talk in this way—but the practical philosopher who is better acquainted with the world might perpaps say of it, that it has all the advantages of both states. It is free from the ignorance and rusticity of untaught nature, and it is exempted from the artifice and dissipations of the large town. In such a state therefore they would expect a people, who, though devoted to agricultural pursuits, have the intelligence of educated men

—men who know the value of civilization without its abuses—men whose ideas were moulded by the intelligence of the city, while they preserved the usages of the country—were familiar with the customs and modes of thinking of the great commercial emporium, while they practiced the virtues found in rural scenes. The truth is, on the supposition that such a people are imbued with christian principle, this is really the best state in which they can be found, because the influences of its truths afford a security that their morals shall remain uncontaminated. Accordingly if we examine into the character of Mr. Pollok, we can see the most manifest accordancy with such a state of society. In the first place, when he awoke to the consciousness of his own intellectual strength, his imagination teemed with images of beauty and sublimity; and when he was capable of expressing his thoughts in classic phrase, we find both his prose writings and poetic full of descriptive scenes. In this respect his lines on Lord Byron might be applied to himself:—

"———And first in rambling school-boy days,
Brittania's mountain-walks and heath-girt lakes,
And story-telling glens, and founts and brooks,
And maids, and dew drops pure and fair, his soul
With grandeur filled, and melody and love."

We have selected also the following allusion to the same subject, where the poet, in describing disappointment, introduces various particulars regarding himself:—

"In humble dwelling born, retired, remote,
In rural quietude, 'mong hills and streams
And melancholy deserts, where the sun
Saw as he passed, a shepherd only, here
And there watching his little flock, or heard
The ploughman talking to his steers; his hopes,
His moving hopes, awoke before him, smiling,
Among the dews and holy mountain airs;
And fancy coloured them with every hue
Of heavenly loveliness."

The following passage is also to the same effect:—

"Wake, dear remembrances! wake childhood days!
Love's friendships wake! and wake thou morn and even!
Sun! with thy orient locks; night, moon, and stars!
And thou celestial! and all ye woods,
And hills, and vales, first trod in dawning life,
And hours of holy musing, wake! wake earth!
And smiling to remembrance, come, and bring,
For thou canst bring, meet argument for song,
Of heavenly harp—meet hearing for the ear,
Of heavenly auditor, exalted high.

We have only further to remark, that the Course of Time shews an extensive observation of civil society, and that his mind was well supplied with the knowledge that is to be found in books. The materials, it must be admitted, were sufficiently heterogeneous; but the informations of scripture form, as it were a golden chain, whereby he has bound them into one harmonious and consistent whole.